A Question in Baptist History.

WHITSITT.

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
presented by
DR. ROBERT G. TORBET

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

H. O. Lewis,

1906

Cost 50¢.

A QUESTION IN BAPTIST HISTORY:

WHETHER THE ANABAPTISTS IN ENGLAND PRACTICED IMMERSION BEFORE THE YEAR 1641?

WITH AN APPENDIX

ON THE BAPTISM OF ROGER WILLIAMS, AT PROVIDENCE, R. I., IN 1639.

BY

WILLIAM H. WHITSITT,

PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, LOUISVILLE, KY.

LOUISVILLE, KY.:
CHAS. T. DEARING.
1896.

LIBRARY

Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1896, by
WM. H. WHITSITT,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

265.16
W623

TO F. W. W.

"AND SHE'S A' THE WORLD TO ME."

54096

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/questioninbaptis0000will_c5w4

INTRODUCTORY.

The question does not relate to the origin of immersion. Immersion as a religious rite was practiced by John the Baptist about the year 30 of our era, and was solemnly enjoined by our Savior upon all his ministers to the end of time. No other observance was in use for baptism in New Testament times. The practice, though sometimes greatly perverted, has yet been continued from the Apostolic age down to our own. As I understand the Scriptures immersion is essential to Christian baptism. The question as to the origin and essential character of immersion is, therefore, not in issue. That is a closed question; it does not admit of being opened among Baptist people.

The issue before us is far different, namely: Whether the immersion of adult believers was practiced in England by the Anabaptists before the year 1641? Whether these English people first adopted immersion for baptism and thus became Baptists in or about the year 1641?

This is purely a question of modern historical research. It does not affect any items of Baptist principle or practice. These are all established upon the Bible. Our watchword for generations has been, "The Bible, the Bible alone, the religion

of Baptists!" It is now too late in the day to alter our views and set forth any new battle cry. Baptists have always maintained that "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and are the only sufficient, certain and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience." Other foundation can no man lay. Whoever attempts it must inevitably fall into error. Let us stand by the old landmarks; let us walk in the old paths.

Several persons have undertaken original investigation at the British Museum to decide where the truth may lie in reference to this question. I had the honor to be of this number. My researches were prosecuted in the summer of 1880. The results of them are contained in a body of manuscript notices and extracts derived from various volumes, most of them found in that collection in the Museum which goes under the name of the King's Pamphlets.

A brief account of King George's Pamphlets may be recorded here. These were brought together by the royalist bookseller, George Thomason. When the Long Parliament assembled in the year 1640 there was a sensible relaxation of the authority both of Church and State in England. By consequence the public press was immediately employed by all sorts of people to a much larger extent than had been possible hitherto. Publications of every kind came teeming from it. About the year 1641 Mr.

Thomason conceived the idea of preserving these for the uses of history, and he began by collecting as many as he could lay his hands on from the preceding year. His enterprise was continued unweariedly for more than twenty years, down to the year 1662. Being himself a bookseller, and situated at the center of London trade, he enjoyed facilities that could scarcely be improved upon. Few publications of any sort escaped his attention. His materials were duly arranged in chronological order, and he was careful in most instances to inscribe with ink upon the title page the date on which the respective works appeared, together with indications regarding the authorship wherever the same might be known to him. They constitute a large library, and are unrivaled sources for the history of that period.

Thomason's collection remained in a measure unprotected from the year 1662, when the work ceased, down to the year 1762, at which time it was purchased by King George III. for three hundred pounds and presented to the British Museum, and therefore was named in his honor. It has been accessible to scholars for 134 years.

Another investigator was Rev. Henry Martyn Dexter, D.D., of Boston, Massachusetts, one of the foremost authorities for original research in the department of church history that has yet appeared in America. He spent "some days" at the Museum, for this purpose in the winter of 1880–81, and gathered the fruits of his labors into a volume entitled,

"The True Story of John Smyth, the Se-Baptist, told by Himself and his Contemporaries." This work which appeared in the month of December, 1881, is of the highest importance. Though I had reached the conclusion that immersion was introduced into England in the year 1641, and publicly announced the same in September, 1880, I cheerfully concede the high merits of Dr. Dexter. He uniformly exhibits the best kind of learning, great thoroughness and patient accuracy. Moreover, at the time when he gave himself to this particular labor, he had enjoyed wide experience in the business of original historical research, and his acquaintance with the library of the British Museum was extensive and valuable.

Numbers of the citations which I had sought out in the year 1880, and which I still retain in manuscript form, I found reproduced in an independent fashion by Dr. Dexter in 1881. Likewise he fell upon a good many passages that I had not seen. In setting forth the facts of the case at this time I shall make use of the researches of this admirable scholar as well as of my own. It is my purpose to accord to him the fullest credit for all that he has done; therefore, when citations shall be given, no mention will be made of him in case they are derived from my own manuscript collections. But in every instance where they shall be taken from his volume mentioned above, that fact will be definitely stated.

A QUESTION IN BAPTIST HISTORY.

I.

RECENT INVESTIGATIONS IN BAPTIST HISTORY.

THE earliest author of note in this department of research is Thomas Crosby, who published a History of the English Baptists in four volumes, London, 1738–40. It is a work of real merit in many directions, and of the first importance to every student of Baptist history. Mr. Crosby was followed by Rev. Isaac Backus with a History of New England, with particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians called Baptists. Three vols., Boston, 1777–1796. He is in every sense the equal of his predecessor, and in some respects may be allowed to have gone beyond him. Rev. Joseph Ivimey next appears with a history of the English Baptists. Four vols., London, 1811–1830. The first two volumes are largely dependent upon Crosby, who covers most of the period occupied by them; nevertheless it is a praiseworthy performance, and has always been received with favor. The next work was by Rev. David Benedict, D.D., entitled A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World. Two vols., Bos-

ton, 1813. Another edition, almost entirely rewritten, was issued at New York in 1848. Both of these are indispensable for American Baptist history.

These authors one and all have rendered important services, but owing to circumstances over which they had no control, none of them had access to the important documents illustrating the movement under Smyth, Helwys and Murton, which are preserved in the archives of the Mennonite church at Amsterdam, in Holland. They accomplished all that was in their power, when one considers the situation they occupied. They deserve the heartiest recognition and gratitude. It would be unreasonable to expect them to achieve impossible things. Subsequent generations, who enjoyed facilities and information that were beyond the reach of these excellent students, made progress beyond the point that had been attained by their researches; but that progress would not have been possible without the foundations which they had laid.

In 1851 the works of John Robinson, pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers, with a memoir and annotations by R. Ashton, in three volumes, were published at London and Boston. The learned editor (vol. 3, p. 461) gave utterance to the following statement: "It is rather a singular fact that zealous as were Mr. Smyth and his friends for believers' baptism, and earnest as were their opponents in behalf

of infant baptism, the question of the mode of baptism was never mooted by either party. *Immersion baptism does not appear to have been practiced or pleaded for by either Smyth or Helwys, the alleged founder of the General Baptist Denomination in England.* Nothing appears in these controversial writings to warrant the supposition that they regarded immersion as the proper and only mode of administering that ordinance. Incidental allusions there are in their own works and in the replies of Robinson that the baptism which Mr. Smyth performed on himself must have been rather by affusion or pouring." (Evans, vol. 1, p. 203.) The result obtained by Mr. Ashton was mainly of the negative sort, but that a man of his ability and research should suggest doubts that the baptism employed by Smyth and Helwys could have been anything else than immersion was matter for sober reflection.

Still no decided progress in this investigation was possible without the co-operation and assistance of Mennonite scholars. Smyth and Helwys resided at Amsterdam at the time when their movement was set on foot, and it was from that quarter alone that reliable information could be procured about their manner of conducting it. The Mennonite church with which they both had intimate relations was endowed with the historic sense, and had preserved in her archives a number of invaluable documents concerning this business.

For a long season Mennonite scholars had not displayed any lively curiosity on this topic, for the reason that when immersion was adopted in England in 1641 the previous intimate connections with their English brethren were entirely broken off, and had never been restored.

When Rev. B. Evans, D.D., was preparing his work, entitled Early English Baptists, 2 vols., London, 1862 and 1864, he first broke the ice and succeeded in engaging the interest and assistance of Prof. S. Muller, of the Mennonite College at Amsterdam, a man of the highest character for learning and probity. No person of the former generation appears to have been more influential or honored among that excellent body of Christians in Holland. A singular incident is that Dr. Dexter (Congregationalism, p. 636, note 42), who is commonly so exact in his statements, should confound him with Fred. Muller; Prof. de Hoop Scheffer, who knew him far more intimately, calls him "the professor S. Muller" (De Brownisten, p. 128, note 2), an entirely different and more important personage.

Prof. Muller entered into the archives of the Mennonite church, and bringing forth a number of documents that had not been disturbed perhaps for two hundred years, translated them and sent them to Dr. Evans, who published them in the Early English Baptists, vol. 1, pp. 209-224, and pp. 244-272; vol. 2, pp. 21-51. Here was indeed an inestimable

treasure. Dr. Evans did not understand very well what use to make of it; but he placed the world under lasting obligations by merely inserting it in his book. It was impossible to put off for any considerable period a better knowledge of the facts after that great light had appeared.

That Prof. Muller, whose name sounded well among scholars in every part of the continent, should give his splendid authority to the statement (Evans, vol. 1, p. 223) that neither "the Waterlanders, nor any other of the various parties of the Netherland Doopsgezinden practiced at any time baptism by immersion," was likewise a revelation to many students. Moreover, the dazed and uncertain condition in which the mind of Dr. Evans was thrown was much remarked upon. He could take no definite position, but sometimes was inclined to the notion that immersion was introduced into England long after the time of Smyth, and then "speedily became the rule with both sections of the Baptist community." (Vol. 2, p. 79.)

With all his manifest defects, it was Evans who laid the foundations of the new learning in Baptist history by procuring access to the archives of the Mennonite church. After that had occurred, it was only a question of time when additional study of these sources of information should diffuse additional light.

The Quaker author, Robert Barclay, next appeared

with the well-known work entitled The Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth, London, 1876, in which he founded upon the documents published by Evans, and leaned upon the arm of Prof. J. G. de Hoop Scheffer, the distinguished successor of Prof. S. Muller, who had been the colaborer of Dr. Evans. The chief advance made by Barclay consisted in fixing a precise date for the introduction of immersion into England. He says, Inner Life, p. 73: "The practice of immersion appears to have been introduced in England on the 12th of September, 1633." The work of Dr. Dexter, Congregationalism as Seen in its Literature, New York, 1880, pp. 318 f., note 108, occupies the same position as Barclay, citing and approving his statement to the effect that immersion "seems to have been introduced into England, 12 September, 1633."

The information that immersion had been introduced into England on the 12th of September, 1633, was derived from Prof. de Hoop Scheffer. This position was called in question by the late Dr. Underhill, of London, and the Dutch scholar was thereupon compelled to defend himself, a task in which he so far succeeded that Barclay allowed the statement to appear in his volume as cited above, whence it was carried over almost in the same words by Dexter, whose work appeared in the summer of 1880.

In September, 1880, I moved up the figures just eight years, announcing, and proving, in the New York Independent for September 2 and 9, that immersion was introduced into England, not in the year 1633, but in the year 1641. Many builders are required to construct a house, and the work can be performed only by slow degrees. This period of eight years is my personal contribution to the recent advance in a more accurate knowledge of Baptist history.

It was an English Baptist historian who laid the foundations of the new learning in Baptist history, but English Baptist scholars have kept holiday in this department ever since his volumes left the press. With such ample collections as the British Museum, the Bodleian and other libraries lying just under their noses, it has seemed a sad hardship that in all these years they did not lift a finger to aid in the labor of investigating original sources. The quiet composure with which they have rested in traditional views that had been exploded and discredited by Evans would be amusing if it were not lamentable. A generation has passed away since 1862, and yet the only English production in Baptist history that has come to the attention of the general public has been the fraud at Epworth, Crowle and West Butterwick, that brings blushes to the cheeks of intelligent Baptist people in all parts of the world.

The conclusion that immersion was first introduced into England in 1641 was conveyed to Prof.

de Hoop Scheffer in a private letter dated September 21, 1879. In a reply that he sent me on the 28th of November, he assured me that after much patient investigation he had accepted my view of the subject. Moreover, in the early portion of 1881, a few months after I had returned from London and publicly announced the results of my researches, this incomparable scholar forwarded the first work that appeared in print giving distinct support to my thesis. It was entitled, De Brownisten te Amsterdam, Gedurende den Eersten Tijd na Hunne Vestiging, in Verband met het Ontstaan van de Broederschap der Baptisten. Bijdrage van J. G. de Hoop Scheffer. Overgedrukt uit de Verslagen en Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeeling Letterkunde, 2de Reeks, Deel X. Amsterdam, Johannes Mueller, 1881.

(The Brownists at Amsterdam, During the First Period After Their Settlement, in Connection with the Origin of the Brotherhood of the Baptists. Contribution by J. G. de Hoop Scheffer. Printed from the Memoirs and Communications of the Royal Academy of Sciences, Department of Literature, Second Series, Part X. Amsterdam, Johannes Mueller, 1881.)

To find that my researches had been brought to the attention of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Amsterdam and endorsed in a work of ample and exact learning by one of the first masters of history

in Europe was an encouragement for an humble professor across the ocean. It offends my modesty to refer to the generous recognition which the peerless Dutch professor accorded to my labors wherever my name is mentioned in his pages; but my present circumstances are so painful and unfortunate that I believe I shall be excused for citing what he says on page 5, note 1: "My attention was directed to them (the company of Smyth and Helwys) in 1862, when I made investigations regarding some of them who united with the Waterland Mennonites in 1615, for the benefit of B. Evans in his Early English Baptists; and I was fortunate enough to recover the Dutch translation of a Confession of Faith, the English original of which had been lost as early as the year 1738, until in 1871 it was at last discovered by H. M. Dexter in the Library of York Minster. I found occasion for renewed investigations in a correspondence I carried on with R. Barclay from 1871 to 1876; and above all in consequence of various inquiries directed to me since August, 1879, by W. H. Whitsitt, Professor at the Baptist Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky—a man whose breadth of view, acute understanding and exceptional skill in historic studies lead me to hope that, vigorously supported by his brethren in the faith, he shall one day execute a task which, up to this time, has never been satisfactorily performed, and which apparently could

be better entrusted to no other person—the writing of a history of the Baptists."

With such endorsement as that of de Hoop Scheffer, who is well described as "an antiquary, a Dutchman, a Mennonite; who has spent his life in the Low countries; who has the official custody of the manuscript remains of this very controversy, and who has for many years been a diligent and intelligent student of the history of the Separatists in Holland," (Dexter, True Story, p. 33,) I felt that my conclusion was entirely secure. In addition to manuscript remains, he also had access to a library which for the subject in hand can hardly be excelled anywhere. Almost from the beginning the Mennonite church in Amsterdam adopted the enlightened custom of collecting printed books. A catalogue of their vast aggregation has been issued in two folio volumes as follows: Catalogus van de Bibliotheek der Vereenigde Doopsgezinde Gemeente te Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 1888. In this work the titles of volumes relating to the Mennonites and kindred denominations occupy 336 pages. With such a body of printed literature at command, in addition to so many priceless manuscripts, and with his admirable industry and insight, it must be conceded that Prof. Scheffer is entitled to speak with authority.

The last month of the year 1881 also brought a work from a Congregational author in support of the position that immersion was introduced into

England in the year 1641. It is entitled: "The True Story of John Smyth, the Se-Baptist, as Told by Himself and his Contemporaries; with an Inquiry Whether Dipping were a New Mode of Baptism, in England, in or about 1641; and Some Consideration of the Historical Value of Certain Extracts from the Alleged 'Ancient Records' of the Baptist Church of Epworth, Crowle and Butterwick (Eng.), Lately Published and Claimed to Suggest Important Modifications of the History of the 17th Century, With Collections Towards a Bibliography of the First Two Generations of the Baptist Controversy. By Henry Martyn Dexter, Boston, 1881." Though Dr. Dexter was pre-eminently an antiquarian, he was likewise a master of historical research. This work of his covers substantially the same ground as that traversed by de Hoop Scheffer in De Brownisten te Amsterdam, which it cites on more than one occasion (p. 2 and p. 33). In the first chapter he shows that Smyth and Helwys did not practice immersion, in the second he brings forward proofs that it was only introduced in 1641, and in the last chapter he exposes at considerable length and with admirable learning the clumsy fraud that has become such a grief and pain in connection with the alleged immersion of Smyth.

Another confirmation of so much weight and authority was more than could have been expected in a single year. My thesis was now supported by two of the most distinguished historians of Europe and

America. The learning which had been brought to bear in the works they produced upon it was as broad and select as has been displayed on any question in recent times. The production of de Hoop Scheffer remained entirely unknown in America, but that of Dr. Dexter was received with candid interest. Among the Baptists some were found who spoke words of recognition. Prof. A. H. Newman said, "Let no Baptist henceforth risk his reputation for scholarship and fair dealing by denying that John Smyth was a Se-Baptist, or that his baptism was, as regards its form, *an affusion.*" He also accepted the year 1641 as the proper date for the introduction of immersion into England, and styles the Crowle fraud a "festering carcass."

One obstacle in the way of these researches was found in the obscurity that rested upon the history of immersion. On this account it has sometimes been easy to lose the way, and fall into confusion of thought. To remedy that defect Prof. de Hoop Scheffer found it desirable to prepare his Overzicht der Geschiedenis van den Doop bij Onderdompeling. Bijdrage van J. G. de Hoop Scheffer. Overgedrukt uit de Verslagen en Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen. Afdeeling Letterkunde, 2de Reeks, Deel XII. Amsterdam, Johannes Mueller, 1882. (Sketch of the History of Baptism by Immersion. Contribution by J. G. de Hoop Scheffer. Printed from the Memoirs and Communi-

cations of the Royal Academy of Sciences. Department Literature, Second Series, Part XII. Amsterdam, Johannes Mueller, 1882.)

In this work is set forth an account of immersion as the act of baptism during the early Christian centuries, in which is shown how it declined since the thirteenth century until it had become uncommon on the continent at the period of the Reformation, though it lingered somewhat later in England. The facts regarding immersion among the Anabaptists are carefully discussed, the author claiming that very few of them adopted it, and showing the extent to which it was practiced in Poland and adjacent countries, the manner in which it was introduced into Holland in 1620, and in England in 1641. This is an important addition to the literature of the subject and serves an admirable purpose in several directions.

In the United States an epoch was introduced in Baptist historiography by the appearance in 1891 of "A Short History of the Baptists," Philadelphia, by Henry C. Vedder, which was marked by strict investigation and exactness of thought and statement. That circumstance made it a notable performance. The spirit of the work is admirable. Dr. Vedder is in substantial accord with the positions set forth by me, and of late has kindly embraced more than one opportunity to declare that fact anew in the public prints.

The latest work in this field appeared in the American Church History Series, and is entitled, "A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States. By A. H. Newman, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Church History, McMaster University, Toronto, Canada." New York, 1894. It is likewise in entire harmony with the results of the recent investigations; the author expresses his adhesion to the view that immersion was introduced into England in 1641. (History, p. 80.)

It must be apparent from the above review that the advance in Baptist history is not any sudden development. It has proceeded by slow degrees for five and forty years. The foundations have been securely laid in wide research among original documents. Clear light has dawned at last on this phase of Baptist history.

II.

BAPTISM IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

IN the earliest times immersion prevailed in England as elsewhere. Apostolic teaching and practice had as yet experienced no marked corruption, in this direction at least. Baptism was frequently performed in rivers; beautiful stories are told by the Venerable Bede concerning the labors of Paulinus in the River Glen and the River Swale during the earlier portion of the seventh century.

The era of baptisteries had not yet arrived, but in due season a generation appeared who forsook the river and adopted this new convenience. Baptisteries were not so numerous nor so artistic in England as in Italy; yet they were in use there, and remains of some of them are claimed to be worthy of attention. (Robinson, History of Baptism, Boston, 1817, pp. 133–4).

To the age of the baptistery succeeded that of the font. The former was situated outside of the church, and sometimes a building was erected for its accommodation. Fonts were constructed inside the churches. Their dimensions were sufficient for the immersion of children, and the use of fonts instead of baptisteries would appear to indicate that

the immersion of adults was gradually becoming an unusual observance. Infant baptism was apparently gaining ground against adult baptism, a tendency which it would be more difficult to resist as the years went on.

At first these fonts were fairly roomy structures, (Robinson, pp. 128–9). In the course of time they became more contracted, but throughout the Middle Ages they must have been always large enough for the immersion of newborn infants. At length, in the latter portion of the 13th century, there occurred in France a decided change of sentiment regarding the act of baptism. Both Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura, a number of years before their death in 1274, made concessions in favor of affusion and aspersion. (De Hoop Scheffer, Overzicht der Geschiedenis van den Doop bij Onderdompeling. Amsterdam, 1882, pp. 11, 12.)

The result of an expression of that kind on the part of the foremost leaders of theological thought became shortly apparent. There was wavering in various quarters. The Synod of Cologne in 1280 decreed that pouring would suffice where newborn children were in peril of immediate death; the Synod of Nismes in 1284 went a step farther in the same direction; a synod in the Netherlands in 1287 opened the gate still wider, directing the officiating priest not to immerse the head of the child, at any time, but to avoid danger by pouring water three times

upon the crown of his head; and in 1293 a like decree was passed by the Synod of Utrecht. (Burrage, Act of Baptism, Philadelphia, pp. 116–119). Here was perhaps the earliest instance where it was required to pour water on the head while the body was immersed.

This notable defection was followed in 1311 by the Council of Ravenna, which decreed that "baptism is to be administered by trine aspersion or immersion," giving preference to aspersion. The foundations were gradually breaking up. France, Germany, Holland and Italy were all more or less affected, and all more or less helpless in the current that had set against the primitive form of baptism. But England in her isolation was as yet practically untouched. Throughout the fourteenth century there is but one sign that she was sensible of the change that had been going forward on the other side of the channel. Wyclif, who died in 1384, remarked in a discourse on baptism: "Nor is it material whether they be dipped once or thrice, or water be poured on their heads: but it must be done according to the custom of the place where one dwells." Dr. Wall, (History of Infant Baptism. Oxford, 1848. Vol. 2, p. 397,) endeavors to break the force of that statement, but without success. It is somewhat singular that only this one concession towards pouring or sprinkling has yet been found in the Church of England during so long a period of time. It has

commonly been supposed that the coldest countries surrendered immersion the soonest, but exactly the opposite is the real state of the case.

Wyclif gave the first note of wavering in the England of the later Middle Ages. Since he was not in the odor of orthodoxy, his opinion was not taken up by a chorus of councils like that which greeted the utterances of Aquinas and Bonaventura in the thirteenth century, but the common sort of people must have received his words with some degree of sympathy. The work of Lyndewode, Dean of the Arches, in 1422, describing the English Constitutions, declares that the manner of baptizing infants is by dipping, and yet he adds a note to say that "This is not to be accounted to be of the essence of baptism: but it may be given also by pouring or sprinkling. And this holds especially where the custom of the church allows it." (Wall, Vol. 2, p. 396). Evidently some churches upon their own responsibility without the authority of any council or liturgy must have already undertaken to practice pouring or sprinkling for baptism.

After the time of Lyndewode innovations began to spring up more rapidly, especially on the continent. In 1482 the Wurzburg Liturgy gave the priest a choice of thrice immersing or thrice washing the infant with water: in 1491 the Bamberg Liturgy prescribed pouring alone, and there had been even earlier instances in France where immer-

sion was wholly left out of the account. Yet in the following century Erasmus in his remarks on Cyprian's Letter 76 to Magnus, declares not without a touch of contempt: "Infants are poured upon in our country; they are immersed in England." (Scheffer, Overzicht, p. 18). In 1533 Henry VIII. caused his infant daughter Elizabeth to be immersed at Greenwich, and in 1537 his infant son Edward was immersed at Hampton Court Chapel. Such a ceremony would have been possible at that time perhaps in few other royal households of Western Christendom.

However, outside pressure was becoming perceptible in England. The Reformers, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, while dispensing with many customs that had grown up in connection with baptism in the Catholic Church, yet made no change in the rite itself, as the same was practiced in the regions where they lived. Possibly Luther was the most conservative of the three, and would have been well pleased to restore immersion. In his Sermon on Baptism published in 1518 he expresses himself to that effect, and likewise in the work styled "The Babylonish Captivity," which appeared in 1520. The same is true of his Larger Catechism and of the baptismal formulas issued in 1523 and 1526.

But he found that the current was too strong, and in a small work entitled "How One Should Properly Baptize," etc., published in 1523, he prescribed

that the administrator shall "pour water upon the candidate, and say I baptize thee," etc. Nearly all the liturgies of the Lutheran Church indicate that this form prevailed. (Scheffer, Overzicht, pp. 19, 20).

The Reformed or Presbyterian Church, with which the Church of England was for a season somewhat more closely allied, was less inclined to regard the demands of conservatism, and therefore was more inclined to favor pouring or sprinkling. The Strasburg Order of Baptism, issued in 1525, required pouring and ignored immersion; Zwingli in his book, Von dem Touff, vom Widertouff uund vom Kindertouff, Zurich, 1525, referred to pouring or dipping as the general custom in 1525, (Burrage, pp. 133–4); and Zurich issued an Order of Baptism in 1535 enjoining the minister merely to pour water thrice upon the child, (Burrage, pp. 138–9). A few years later the same city was formally to forbid immersion and require that children should only be sprinkled thrice, (Robinson, History, p. 484).

Tyndale, in his Doctrinal Treatises, 1528, Parker Society, Cambridge, 1848, p. 277, indicates that it was not unheard of even in England for the priest to pour water upon the child's head, and that he himself approved this innovation. His words are as follows: "Behold how narrowly the people look on the ceremony. If aught be left out, or if the child be not altogether dipt in the water; or if, because the child is sick, the priest dare not plunge him into

the water, but pour water on his head, how tremble they! how quake they! 'How say ye, Sir John,' (say they) 'is this child christened enough? Hath it his full Christendom?' They verily believe that the child is not christened..... Now this is false doctrine, verily."

But Henry VIII. had an iron hand, and there was apparently no official retrograde movement as long as he lived. Wall says of the period before Edward VI. (History, Vol. 2, p. 397), "The offices or liturgies for public baptism in the Church of England did all along, so far as I can learn, enjoin dipping without any mention of pouring or sprinkling." Yet the time of change had come, and two years after the death of Henry, the Book of Common Prayer for the year 1549 required indeed the ancient usage of trine immersion, but allowed that if the child were weak it should suffice to pour water upon it. This is understood to have been the earliest official recognition of a practice that had been gaining headway for a long season.

Other changes followed more rapidly. In 1552 a new Prayer Book appeared in which only a single immersion was enjoined, and pouring was again made optional in case of weakness. In the sad days of Queen Mary the ecclesiastical leaders of the country were scattered on the continent, and so were brought into closer contact with the sentiment and practices that prevailed there. Numbers of

them were in touch with Calvin at Geneva who practiced pouring exclusively since 1536 and had openly published his Form of Administering the Sacraments in 1545, in which immersion was omitted. (Wall, vol. 2, p. 400.) By that means, and influenced through the atmosphere which existed almost everywhere beyond the Channel, these men were rendered impatient of the slower pace at which things were moving in their native country. To one who surveys the whole situation it seems a marvel that the Church of England should have held out so long and so stoutly. Still the limits of her power to resist had now been reached. At the accession of Elizabeth in 1558 the exiles returned and began the labor of innovation. The queen who had not traveled abroad naturally used her endeavors to resist them. In 1571 a book was issued under her auspices in which church wardens were instructed to see "that in every church there be a holy founte, *not a bason*, wherein baptism may be ministered, and it be kept comely and clean." In 1584 another book appeared in which a similar item is found to the effect that "the font be not removed, nor that the curate do baptize in parish churches *in any basons*, nor in any other form than is already prescribed," etc. (Robinson, pp. 114,115.)

The queen had an imperious will, but she could not stand against the movement that was now going forward. It had been started by Wyclif as early as

1384, and was practically completed after two centuries of struggle and delay. The fonts were removed from the churches in spite of Elizabeth's authority. Dr. Wall, History, vol. 2, p. 401, says that "in the latter times of Queen Elizabeth, and during the reigns of King James and of King Charles I., very few children were dipped in the font."

Thomas Blake, of Tamworth, indeed, writing in 1645 (Infants Freed from Anti-Christianism, p. 1), says: "I have been an eye-witness of *many infants* dipped." Here he seems to talk like an adept at special pleading, especially as on page 4 of the same work he declares in more moderate terms, "I have seen *several* dipped." (Wall, vol. 2, p. 402.) Perhaps the truth is stated by Dean Stanley, as cited by Dr. Armitage (History of the Baptists. New York, 1887, p. 434), who says that according to the annals of the English Church the last recorded instances of immersion before the Restoration were the dipping of three infant sons of Sir Robert Shirley, in the reign of Charles I.

The baptism of infants in the Church of England had long since crowded out the baptism of adult believers. The immersion of a grown-up person as a religious observance seems to have become to all intents a lost art. For a long time no provision appeared in the Prayer Book for the "Public Baptism of Such as are of Riper Years," until the year 1661. Two reasons are given for its introduction at that

time; one that it had become necessary "by ye growth of Anabaptism, through ye Licentiousness of ye late Times crept in amongst us," and the other that it would "be allwaies usefull for ye baptizing of Natives in our Plantations, and others converted to ye Faith." (Dexter. True Story of John Smyth. Boston, 1881, p. 23. Cf. Wall, vol. 2, pp. 321–2.) Baptists were about that time making their influence felt; moreover, England had now become, what she had not been before, a commercial and colonizing nation.

Generally speaking, the Reformed or Presbyterian Church was indifferent, if not opposed, to immersion. It has been shown above how Strasburg decided against it in 1525, Zurich in 1535 and Geneva in 1545. When the Westminster Divines, who were preparing the Directory for Public Worship of God, came to discuss this subject on the seventh of August, 1644, it was now their turn to reject immersion as their continental predecessors had done. This rite had long been disused among Presbyterians, and every member of the Assembly was agreed that sprinkling was the best mode of baptism. The question at issue before them was whether immersion should be tolerated as an alternate form of baptism and allowed to stand by the side of sprinkling. Numbers felt unwilling to go on record as rejecting a New Testament usage by formal action, and hence the vote was close. If they had

allowed immersion to stand, it is likely that nobody in their communion would have employed it. But their sentiments were too decided even to allow it to stand. Twenty-five went against it, while only twenty-four were willing to concede that it was one of the modes by which baptism might be administered. (John Lightfoot's Works, London, 1824, Vol. 13, p. 300.) This was the most radical action against immersion which up to that time had ever been taken by one of the larger denominations of Christendom.

Thus it will be seen that though England moved at some distance in the rear, she moved nevertheless. The immersion of infants was practically extinct in the Church of England by the year 1600. By the year 1644 the Presbyterians of England and Scotland had even traveled far enough to decide by a formal vote in the Assembly at Westminster that immersion was not a proper form in which to administer baptism, an extreme to which the Church of England has not yet advanced. The immersion of adults had become so far unknown that it could be stated without reservation in the Jessey Church Records for the year 1640 that "none had then so practiced in England to professed believers."

IV.

BAPTISM AMONG THE ANABAPTISTS OF THE SIXTEENTH AND EARLY PORTION OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY IN ENGLAND.

ANABAPTISTS first appeared in England in the earlier portion of the sixteenth century. On the 25th of May, 1535, 19 men and 6 women, all of them from Holland, were arrested on the charge of being Anabaptists. (Stowe, Chronicle, p. 571.) The city of Muenster was at that moment under siege, and was captured a month later. In 1538 six others were taken, who were also from Holland. (Stowe, p. 576.) Fuller, in his Church History, intimates that they had come over in the hope of finding protection on account of the prospective marriage of Henry VIII. to Anne of Cleves. (Crosby. History of the English Baptists. London, 1738–40. Vol. 1, p. 39.) In 1539 16 men and 15 women, Anabaptists, were banished from England and went to Delft, Holland, where they were seized by the authorities and executed, the men being beheaded and the women drowned. (Crosby, vol. 1, p. 42.)

The Anabaptists of England in the sixteenth century were nearly all from Holland. Joan Boucher, of Kent, an English woman, was an exception, but

there were very few others. The celebrated Mr. Fox, in a letter to Queen Elizabeth, in 1575, says: "I understand there are some (Anabaptists) here in England, tho' not English, but come hither from Holland, * * * and we have great reason to give God thanks on this account, that I hear not of any Englishman that is inclined to this madness." (Crosby, vol. 1, p. 71.)

But none of the Anabaptists of Holland or of the adjacent sections of Germany were immersionists. So far as any account of them has come to light, they were uniformly in the practice of pouring or sprinkling for baptism, excepting the Collegiants, who, at Rhynsburg, began to immerse in 1620.

In fact, few Anabaptists anywhere were immersionists. The Reformers, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, as we have seen, quietly accepted the usage of the Catholic Church and raised no contention at all about the act of baptism. Whatever custom was current regarding this point among the people where they labored, was embraced by them. Pouring and sprinkling were current almost everywhere, and they were accordingly adopted without scruple.

The same remark applies to the Anabaptists, who insisted upon baptism of believers only, rarely made any contention about the mode, and almost always practiced pouring or sprinkling. Dr. Balthazar Hubmeier, one of their most worthy and influential leaders, describes the act of baptism as follows:

"To baptize in water is *to pour outward water over the confessor of his sins*, in accordance with the divine command, and to inscribe him in the number of sinners upon his own confession and acknowledgement. So has John baptized." (Von dem Christenlichen Tauff der gläubigen durch Balthasarn Hübmör, 1525, p. 5.) "In April, 1525, it being Easter, the customary season for baptism, Hubmeier called his followers together and *having sent for a pail of water* solemnly baptized three hundred persons at one time." (Burrage, p. 131.)

Felix Mantz, another leader, also practiced pouring. Under date of February 7, 1525, George Schad, of Zollikon, near Zurich, testified, "that he had passed all his days in sin and blasphemy; that he had been greatly distressed on this account, and that he had prayed to God for grace and for conviction of sin, and God manifested his grace to him so that he was convicted of sin. Then God promised him if he should depart from sin that He would also forgive his sin. That promise moved him greatly, and he asked for the token of brotherly love, that he might do to his neighbor all the good that he did to himself. Then he submitted to have *water poured upon him*, and Felix Mantz was the person who baptized him." (Egli, Actensammlung zur Geschichte der Zuercher Reformation, Zurich, 1879, p. 283.) Another instance may be cited: "Hans Bruggbach, of Zumikon, stood up and cried out how great a sin-

ner he was, and desired that they should pray to God for him. Then George Blaurock asked him whether he desired the grace of God. He replied, yes. Then Mantz stood up and said, Who shall hinder me from baptizing him? Then Blaurock answered, 'Nobody.' Thereupon Mantz *took a dipper of water and baptized him* in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost." (Egli, p. 284. Cf. Burrage, p. 130.)

It used to be said that the word Katabaptist, so often applied to Anabaptists, by their opponents during the Reformation period, contained indisputable proof that they were immersionists. The preposition *kata*, in its primary or local usage, means *down*, and so, it was argued, Katabaptist must have been one who baptized downwards, that is, immersed. But just as *ana*, meaning primarily *up*, came to be used in the sense of *again*, so *kata*, in several technical terms, means *against*, and Prof. Scheffer has fully shown that in the usage of contemporary authors this was its meaning in the word under consideration, and that Zwingli and others in styling them Katabaptists meant only that they were "against" the commonly accepted baptism. (Overzicht, pp. 24–26.) Thus the same persons were called Anabaptists, or Rebaptizers, because they baptized on profession of faith those who had been christened in infancy, and Katabaptists, or opponents of infant baptism. While the great body of Ana-

baptist believers practiced pouring or sprinkling for baptism, there were a few exceptions in favor of immersion. John Kessler, in his Chronicle of the Reformation in St. Gall, called Sabbata (vol. 1, p. 262), says: "Wolfgang Uolman encountered Conrad Grebel on the journey to Schaffhausen, and while with him was so highly impressed with Anabaptism that he would not simply be poured upon with water out of a dish, but, being entirely naked, he was pressed down and covered over in the Rhine." (Scheffer, Overzicht, p. 23.)

Prof. Scheffer allows himself to assert in this connection that the example of Uolman was followed by no other person, but that is perhaps an extreme position. The people of St. Gall whom Grebel baptized in the Sitter River on Palm Sunday of 1525 it is likely were immersed. Scheffer's reason for calling this in question (Overzicht, p. 23) is that Grebel, with his associates and successors in the Anabaptist faith, from that day to the present, have always baptized by a handful of water merely, and, therefore, that he could not have employed immersion on this occasion. One naturally hesitates to challenge the conclusions of a Mennonite scholar of so much ability and distinction: but it is admitted that Grebel immersed Uolman in the Rhine, and it is possible that he also immersed numbers of people who followed him from St. Gall to the Sitter River. Prof. Scheffer replies to this by pointing out that immer-

sion is expressly described where Uolman was baptized in the Rhine, and that it cannot be conceded on the banks of the Sitter River without a like definite statement. Yet it is not easy to discover any other reason why Grebel and his friends should journey as far as the river over a difficult road and hold their worship in the open air upon its banks.

The Benedictine monk Clement Sender, an eye-witness, describes the usage of the Anabaptists of Augsburg in this regard, and Dr. Theodore Keim, in his paper on Ludwig Hetzer (Jahrbuecher für Deutsche Theologie, Stuttgart, 1856, p. 278), reproduces the substance of his testimony. "The act of baptism," he says, "was administered in the River Lech, the men being naked and the women wearing bathing-trousers; or in times of persecution it was administered simply by sprinkling the forehead in cellars and barnyards." In this connection he mentions the wife of a stonemason, Adolf Ducher, "who during the absence of her husband at Vienna three days in the Holy Week of 1527 opened her house, which was favorably situated on the River Lech, for the purpose of baptizing."

No sufficient reason appears for calling in question the authority of Sender. If it be allowed to stand then we must conclude that the Anabaptists of Augsburg at the most flourishing moment of their existence, when their church numbered 1100 members, practiced immersion as well as sprinkling. Prof.

Scheffer is not able to understand why Sebastian Franck, who lived not far away at Ulm, and described in his Chronicles (1536) with the greatest detail a number of Anabaptist sects should not have heard of such an unusual occurrence as immersion at Augsburg (Overzicht, p. 27). The argument from silence is not always conclusive. The testimony of Sender must be allowed to stand until some better reasons shall be advanced to overthrow it. If my view is sustained it must follow that immersion was practiced at two points at least by the Anabaptists of the Reformation period, namely, at St. Gall, in Switzerland, and Augsburg, in Bavaria. The question has been mooted as to what proportion of the whole number of Anabaptist believers were immersionists, but the data for a correct conclusion are not satisfactory. Some would say that possibly one in twenty of them may have been immersionists, whilst others would establish the proportion as no greater than one in a hundred.

There were immersing Anabaptists in Poland, Silesia, Lithuania and Pomerania (Scheffer, Overzicht, p. 32). The common impression is that these were derived from St. Gall, in Switzerland. Scattered by persecution the Swiss Anabaptists were forced to travel into many countries, and it is conceivable that some of them found their way to the countries mentioned. But Scheffer in the work already cited has assumed a new position on that sub-

ject, declaring that baptism of no kind was practiced among the Polish believers until they introduced immersion in 1575. In the previous year a catechism, the first on record in Poland that required this rite for professed believers, was published at Cracow. Martin Czechowitz, pastor at Wilna and later at Lublin, he represents to have been responsible for this change. (Overzicht, p. 31.) He likewise affirms that Czechowitz was induced to prefer immersion as the act of baptism solely for the reason that the immersion of infants was still customary among Catholics and Protestants alike, because the countries in question were in the neighborhood of the Greek Church, where it was the only form of administering the ordinance. (Overzicht, p. 33.) The Unitarians of Poland, who had discontinued the use of baptism, were also influenced by these conditions so far as to come out in favor of immersion in their catechism of 1609, which was reprinted in 1659 and 1680. (Overzicht, p. 37.)

Several of these statements have not yet been completely established by proofs. It is just possible that immersionists may have existed in Poland before the appearance of the Catechism at Cracow in 1574, and that they may have obtained their practice from Switzerland rather than from the Greek Church. This view appears to have about as firm historical support as the one set forth above.

In general, then, it may be declared that the very

small number of immersing Anabaptists on the continent of Europe were confined to regions remote from Holland whence it has been shown that the Anabaptists of England during the sixteenth century were derived.

The Anabaptists of Holland appear to have been, without exception, engaged in the practice of pouring and sprinkling. Melchior Hoffman was understood and represented among them as their "Father." It was due to his activity that anabaptism was transplanted from Southern to Northern Germany, (Keller, Geschichte der Wiedertäufer, etc., Muenster, 1880, p. 121), and Hoffman practiced pouring. Cornelius (Geschichte des Muensterischen Aufruhr's, Leipzig, 1855, vol. 2, p. 222,) says that "in the sacristy of the Great Church at Emden Hoffman could venture openly to administer baptism in the year 1530." Hast (Geschichte der Wiedertaeufer, Muenster, 1836, p. 255,) asserts upon the authority of the anabaptist Ubbo Philipps that 300 persons were baptized by Hoffman out of a large bucket on this occasion. The act of baptism could not have been immersion, in this case.

The "Confession of the Two Sacraments" that was composed by Bernard Rothmann and issued at Muenster on the 8th of October, 1537, is in some respects a singular performance. It seems to partake of the indecision that was the bane of Rothmann's character, and which probably more than anything else was the cause of the disaster at Muen-

ster. He talks as bravely as could be desired about "plunging into the water," "plunging under the water," "thrusting into the water," and yet he turns about and disappoints every expectation as follows: "to baptise signifies to plunge into the water, to immerse in water, and baptism signifies an immersion or *sprinkling with water.*" (De Hoop Scheffer, Overzicht, pp. 26–7). Baptizing and sprinkling were in his view synonymous terms. Scheffer (Overzicht, p. 27,) also directs attention to the circumstance that he describes as a "thrusting into the water" the baptism of the Evangelicals, who throughout Lower Germany employed no other rite than sprinkling and pouring.

No baptisms were performed at Muenster or elsewhere under the "Confession of the Two Sacraments" and hence it is of no special consequence in this history. Before Rothmann could make up his mind to go forward and begin the work of rebaptizing the reins had slipped from his hands and Jan Mathys, of Holland, the Prophet, had obtained control of the Anabaptist movement at Muenster. Two of his emissaries appeared there on the 5th of January, 1534, and baptized Rothmann himself together with the rest of the preachers. As the work was begun and prosecuted in Rothmann's house, (Cornelius, vol. 2, p. 234,) the rite was probably administered by pouring; at least that was the case in all later instances where one can obtain any distinct view of the ceremony.

For example, on Friday the 27th of February, 1535, all who remained in the city were required to submit to baptism, and an eyewitness describes the proceedings as follows: "There stood upon the market place three or more preachers and baptized the people. The preachers said to the people whom they baptized that they should turn from their sins and work righteousness; and they had a pail of water standing before them, and the people went upon their knees before the preachers, and the preachers *baptized the people with three handfulls of water* in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." (Cornelius, Berichte der Augenzeugen ueber das Muensterische Wiedertaeuferreich. Muenster, 1853, p. 20).

Let the following suffice as instances of the manner in which baptism in private houses was later performed at Muenster: "Frau Van der Recke was first in Rothmann's house, where the gospel was proclaimed to herself and her daughters. Then one of the daughters fell upon her knees and received baptism, afterwards the other, and last of all the mother." (Cornelius, Berichte, p. 409).

No other act of baptism appears to have been practiced by Anabaptists anywhere in this portion of the country. We have exact descriptions of the baptism of a number in the year 1534 and 1535 at Maastricht, Holland, where there was a considerable body of them in close touch with the authorities at

Muenster. Some of these may be cited as specimens. Bartholomeus van den Berge, "being asked in what manner he was rebaptized replied that the baptizer took water out of a small dish and spoke thus: I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." (Jos. Habets, De Wederdoopers Te Maastricht. Roermond, 1877, p. 136).

Mente Jan Heynen, stepdaughter of the preceding, "being asked in what manner she was rebaptized, replied: The baptizer took spring water and baptized her in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost." (Habets, p. 138).

Mathys Spangemecker, testifies "that he was rebaptized at the house of Jan van Ginke, the younger, in the garret of the house,.....and that Herr Henrich baptized him with water upon his head in the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Ghost." (Habets, pp. 143–4).

Heynrik Tymmerman "says that when he was baptized, Jan the Landlord of the house was present, and his brother Michael;.....that Jan the Landlord brought him there. Furthermore he says that while he was being baptized he was kneeling down upon his knees." (Habets, p. 152).

Bouterwek, Zur Literatur und Geschichte der Wiedertäufer, Bonn, 1864, pp. 83–87, gives the testimony of a number of Anabaptists of Wesel, Holland, during the period in question which shows that in this city also the rite was regularly administered by sprinkling and pouring.

An incorrect impression regarding the act of baptism as administered by Menno Simons was long current in our country, but that excellent historian, Dr. Burrage, finally corrected a blunder in the translation upon which it was established. He says, Act of Baptism, p. 140: "It has been supposed that in a passage in his Explanation of Christian Baptism in the folio edition of his works, p. 419, Menno expressed his own view of the act of baptism, and his words have been translated by Morgan Edwards and others as follows: 'After we have searched ever so diligently, we shall find no other baptism besides dipping in water which is acceptable to God and maintained in his word.'

"'But,' adds Dr. Burrage, 'the passage is not thus correctly rendered. What Menno has in view is the representation that Christ and the Apostles taught two kinds of baptism, that of believers and that of infants;' and (with respect to that point) he says: 'However diligently we seek, night and day, yet we find no more than one baptism in water that is pleasing to God, expressed and contained in his word—namely, this baptism on faith.'" The last clause, which is so essential to the meaning, is not found in the passage translated by Morgan Edwards, who also made a mistake in regard to the word doopsel as employed by Menno. (Materials Towards a History of the Baptists in Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, 1770, p. 93, note.)

Menno's most definite expression touching the act of baptism is found in the folio edition of his works (1681), p. 22, where he says: "I certainly think that these and similar commands (to love one's enemies, to crucify the flesh and the lusts thereof) are more painful and burdensome to perverted flesh, which is everywhere so prone to walk in its own way, than it is *to receive a handful of water.*" After citing the above passage, Scheffer says: "A handful of water, that is to say, simple pouring with water, was in use among the Anabaptists during the first half of the sixteenth century, both in Switzerland, where they first arose, and also in the countries whither they had extended themselves, such as Upper Germany (with the single exception of Augsburg), and the western portions of the Empire, as Belgium and the Netherlands." (Overzicht, p. 28.) It has been intimated that his position may be extreme, regarding the small extent to which immersion was adopted among the Anabaptists of Switzerland, but there can be no question of the correctness of the contention that among the Mennonites or other Anabaptists of Holland and adjacent countries there never existed at any period such a custom as immersion.

As was indicated above, historical records show that the Anabaptists of England during the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century came from Holland. These being in the practice of pouring, it follows conclusively that none of the Ana-

baptists of England during the period mentioned were immersionists. That incontestable deliverance of history has now and then been called in question because Thomas Fuller, in his Church History of Britain, published in 1655, when treating of certain Hollanders who were brought to trial in 1538 adds that "these Anabaptists for the main were but Donatists new dipt." (Crosby, vol. 1, p. 39.) The times had passed by in England when everybody who was christened had to be dipped, but this learned and witty author was well aware of that old usage and of the fact that it was no longer in vogue. Yet "dipped" was still in use as a synonym for "christened." Mr. Fuller was fond of the alliteration "Donatists new dipt," and employed the expression for no other purpose than to indicate that the Anabaptists were but Donatists with a new name. He intended to pronounce no opinion whatever on the question whether these men, who lived more than a hundred years before the time at which he wrote, employed pouring or immersion for baptism.

In conclusion, the general result may be stated that few Anabaptists of any country were immersionists, and that none of the Anabaptists of England in the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth centuries were immersionists. Therefore the Jessey Church Records were entirely in the right, as far as English Anabaptists were concerned, when they declared in 1640 that "none had then so practiced in England to professed believers."

IV.

BAPTISM AMONG THE FOLLOWERS OF JOHN SMYTH AND THOMAS HELWYS.

JOHN SMYTH opened his public career as a preacher in the Established Church at Lincoln. Most authorities represent that he continued there until the year 1602, when he laid down his office and left the State Church. (Scheffer, De Brownisten te Amsterdam, etc., Amsterdam, 1881, p. 80.) But I am inclined to fix the date in 1603, for the reason that I *discovered in the Library of Emmanuel College at Cambridge, in the summer of 1880, a small volume of which he seems to have been the author. Following is the title: The bright morning starre, or the resolution and exposition of the 22 Psalme, preached publickely in foure sermons at Lincoln, by John Smyth, preacher of the citie. Printed 1603. Scheffer himself (p. 80, note 5) is somewhat inclined to the opinion, based on the existence of this book, that Smyth remained in the Establishment at least during a portion of the year 1603.

He next became pastor of a Brownist or Independent Church, collected perhaps by his own ex-

*"My friend, Prof. Whitsitt, found a volume of his sermons in the Library of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, under the title: The bright morning starre," &c. Scheffer, De Brownisten, p. 79, note 3.

ertions, at Gainsborough on the Trent (Scheffer, De Brownisten, pp. 80–1), where he was very active and successful for several years. The representation that he was at one time vicar of Gainsborough appears to lack support. The church of John Robinson which went over to Holland in 1608, and sent a portion of its members to New England in 1620 was an outgrowth of Smyth's labors at Gainsborough (Dexter, Congregationalism as Seen in its Literature, New York, 1880, p. 316. Scheffer, p. 84, note 6). Surely he builded wiser than he knew. It was indirectly due to the labors of Smyth that the Pilgrim Fathers later became established at Plymouth in New England.

Possibly it was in October or November, 1606, that Smyth got away from England to Amsterdam with a company of his brethren, leaving those who remained behind under the pastoral care of Mr. Robinson and their teacher Richard Clyfton. (Scheffer, pp. 84–5). Smyth and his followers did not unite themselves to the church of Johnson and Ainsworth which had been established already a number of years in Amsterdam, but organized a church of their own that was known as the Second English Church, the other being commonly designated as the Ancient Church. (Smyth, Differences of the Churches of the Separation, 1608, title page.)

Falling under the influence of the Waterland Mennonites Mr. Smyth soon altered his opinions and,

perhaps in October, 1608, became an Anabaptist. Being a man of singular power in many directions, it seems likely that he was able to carry with him the entire membership of the Second English Church (Scheffer, p. 104); it is not known that a single one of them refused to join him in the new venture. The whole number was about forty (Scheffer, p. 104).

Here is the earliest Anabaptist church, that was composed exclusively of English people, and yet it did not exist on English soil. Not many days after the work had been accomplished, Mr. Smyth concluded that he had acted hastily. Coming into closer intercourse with the Mennonites he was induced to believe that the baptism which he had administered to himself and his people was not quite orderly, and to regret the course which he had pursued. His reflections must have been made known to his people as early as January or February, 1609, and possibly efforts were already on foot to induce them in turn to enter the Mennonite communion. (Scheffer, p. 127).

The church was apparently of one mind in becoming Anabaptists and receiving adult baptism, but when this new proposition was advanced differences appeared that could not be allayed. Yet his power was so great that 17 women and 14 men united with him in the purpose to join the Mennonites. These required the English brethren to subscribe a petition expressing sorrow for the disorderly baptism,

and requesting to be received into their fellowship. A copy of this petition somewhat incorrectly printed is given by Evans, Early English Baptists, London, 1862, vol. 1, pp. 244–5; an English translation of the same appears p. 209. The original in the handwriting of Smyth exists in the archives of the Mennonite Church at Amsterdam (Scheffer, p. 128.)

In addition the Mennonites required a Confession of Faith, in order to satisfy themselves that the theological opinions of the English were the same as their own. This Confession is published in English by Evans, vol. 1, p. 253. The original in Latin, also in the handwriting of Smyth, is found in the Archives of the Amsterdam Church, and has been published by Scheffer, p. 169.

Thirty-two people had set their hands to the petition desiring admission to the Mennonite communion. The others, eight or ten in number, refused to take such a step. They regarded the movement towards the Mennonites in the light of a sin against the Holy Spirit. It was their intention to remain where they were and walk in the light whereunto they had attained. That small company by bravely standing their ground at a critical period became the founders of the body of Christian people which subsequently acquired the title of General Baptists in England. Richard Clyfton, an eye witness, in "A plea for infants and elder people concerning their baptisme, or a processe of the passages between Mr.

John Smyth and Richard Clyfton, Amst., 1610, says, according to Scheffer, p. 129 (note), that "*not above ten persons*" were of the party. The male members were Thomas Helwys, Wm. Piggott, Thos. Seamer and John Murton (Evans, vol. 1, p. 210), the others being, as is supposed, females.

As soon as Helwys heard of the petition of Smyth and his friends requesting to be admitted to the Mennonite church they entered a protest written in Latin, and published by Scheffer, De Brownisten, p. 172, announcing that they had already excluded the offenders for their sin and desiring the Mennonites to beware of them. The Mennonites, possibly hoping that they might make peace between the warring elements also requested Helwys and his friends to submit a Synopsis of their Faith, which was given in the same hand and language as the protest and is published in the above mentioned work by Scheffer, p. 173. Not content with the protest which they had made in Latin, Helwys and his brethren tried it over again, perhaps with superior effect, in English, under date of March 12, 1609. (Evans, vol. 1, pp. 209–11. The date, 1610, given at the bottom of page 210, is wrong by one year. Scheffer, p. 135).

These protests, one in Latin and the other in English, had the effect of putting off the day when the Mennonites should receive Smyth and his people into their communion. Helwys and his party of nine, who did not hesitate, after excommunicating

Smyth and his followers, to the number of thirty-one, to denominate themselves the "*True Christian English Church at Amsterdam*" (Scheffer, p. 173), were eager to preserve the closest relations with their Mennonite fellow-Christians, and to prevent these from drawing nigh to their adversaries.

Before the middle of the year 1611 (Scheffer, p. 148), the brave little party of ten issued another confession, not simply for the benefit of the Mennonites, but also for the instruction of the general public, which they styled "A Declaration of Faith of English People, *remaining* at Amsterdam in Holland." (Crosby, vol. 2, Appendix I.) They did not "remain" much longer at Amsterdam; almost as soon as the Declaration had left the press, they also appear to have left Holland for England. (Scheffer, p. 152.)

Something more than a year afterwards Mr. Smyth fell into his last illness; he was buried at the Nieuwe Kerk, at Amsterdam (Scheffer, p. 142), on the first of September, 1612. After his death his followers remained with the Mennonites and continued to knock at the door of their church for admission. With a purpose to further this interest they sent forth "The Last Booke of John Smyth, called the Retractation of His Errors and the Confirmation of the Truth." At the close of it were added "Propositions and Conclusions Concerning the True Christian Religion, Containing a Confession of Faith of

Certain English People *Living* at Amsterdam." (The above was discovered in 1871 by Dr. Dexter, in the Library of York Minster, and is published in full between pp. 117 and 118 in Barclay, Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth, London, 1876.)

Here, then, are four several Confessions of Faith, two by the party of Mr. Smyth, who were struggling for a place among the Mennonites of Amsterdam, and two by Helwys and his nine followers, who were struggling to maintain a separate and independent existence. We can perhaps find out what was the act of baptism among them by considering these documents in their historical setting. An important item of that historical setting is the fact already referred to that the Mennonites, with whom both parties were dealing, have never at any time or place been immersionists. They are unanimous in that contention, the most learned authorities as well as the common people. S. Muller, formerly one of the Professors at the Mennonite College in Amsterdam, and author of many learned works, says: "This mode of baptizing (sprinkling) was from the days of Menno the only usual mode amongst them, and it is still amongst us. The Waterlanders nor any other of the various parties of the Netherland Doopsgezinden *practiced at any time baptism by immersion.*" (Evans, vol. 1, p. 223.) Sprinkling was "the only usual mode," though pouring was some-

times employed; immersion was never resorted to at any time. The testimony of Prof. Scheffer has already been given. He asserts without qualification that immersion was never in use among the Mennonites. (Overzicht, p. 28.)

Another important item is that the baptism of Smyth and his followers was the same as that of the Mennonites, namely, sprinkling or pouring. A body of Mennonite ministers after strict examination on the spot declared as follows on that point: "Therefore first of all we ministers have according to the desire of our brethren, summoned these English before us, and again most perfectly examined them as regards the doctrine of salvation and the government of the church, and also inquired for the *foundation and form of their baptism, and we have not found that there was any difference at all neither in the one nor the other thing.*" (Evans, vol. 1, p. 212.)

A third important item is that there was no immersion practiced anywhere in Holland until the year 1620, one year after the rise of the Collegiants at Rhynsburg, and that it was then introduced by John Geesteranus, who was the first of the Collegiants to submit to it. (Scheffer, Overzicht, p. 39.)

The oldest confession of John Smyth, Art. 15, says: "Baptism is the external sign of the remission of sins, of dying and of being made alive, and therefore does not belong to infants." Evans, vol.

1, p. 254. Cf. the Latin original, Scheffer, pp. 170–1.

The oldest confession of Thomas Helwys and his church, Art. 10, says: "Baptism is the external sign of the remission of sins, of dying and renovation of life, and therefore does not pertain to infants." (Scheffer, p. 174, where the Latin original may be seen.)

The second confession of Thomas Helwys and his church, Art. 14, says: "That baptism, or *washing with water*, is the outward manifestation of dying unto sin and walking in newness of life; and therefore in no wise appertaineth to infants." (Crosby, vol. 2, Appendix I.)

The second confession of John Smyth, Art. 70, says: "That the outward baptism of water is to be administered only upon such penitent and faithful persons as are (aforesaid), and not upon innocent infants or wicked persons. (Matt. iii., 2, 3, compared with Matt. xxviii., 19, 20, and John iv., 1.)"

Art. 71: "That in baptism to the penitent person and believer there is presented and figured, the spiritual baptism of Christ (that is) the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire; the baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ; even the promise of the Spirit which he shall assuredly be made partaker of, if he continue to the end. Gal. iii., 14; Matt. iii., 11; 1 Cor. xii., 13; Rom. vi., 3, 6; Col. ii., 10." (Barclay, between pp. 117 and 118.)

None of these confessions prescribes immersion. When that form of administering the ordinance was once restored there was no difficulty in making it known by words like dip and plunge and immerse. These words do not occur here for the reason that no such custom was then contemplated. The article on baptism in the first confession of Helwys seems to have been borrowed from the same article in the first confession of Smyth. The article on baptism in the second confession of Helwys lays emphasis on the idea of purification and resembles in that point many Reformed or Presbyterian creeds that were at the time in common use.

The two articles in the second confession of John Smyth, who at the moment when it was produced was trying to gain admission to the Mennonite body, show most resemblance to the Creed of Lubbert Gerrits and Hans de Ries, that was subscribed by Smyth and his followers while they were waiting upon the convenience of the Mennonites. (Evans, vol. 1, pp. 245–252; consult Arts. 29, 30.) Of the four Confessions cited the last by Smyth appears to contain more expressions that could be interpreted in favor of immersion than either of the others, and yet if Smyth or his people had declared in favor of that rite they could never have expected to be received into the church upon which their hopes were set.

After the death of Smyth his party continued to

appeal for admission to the Mennonite community, a favor which was at last bestowed on the 21st of January, 1615, *without repeating the baptism*, which they had previously received, it having been declared to be identical with that of the Mennonites.

The relations between the Mennonites of Amsterdam and the Helwys church, after the latter had returned to England, were particularly intimate. In 1624 Elias Tookey and his party of fifteen adherents who had been excluded from the church of John Murton in London endeavored to unite with the Amsterdam church. The points of difference between them were duly discussed (Evans, vol. 2, pp. 21–24 and pp. 32–40), but not a word was said regarding the act of baptism, for the reason that no differences existed on that score, both parties being in the practice of sprinkling or pouring.

By the year 1626 John Murton had succeeded in organizing five churches of his persuasion in England, one each at London, Lincoln, Sarum, Coventry and Tiverton. (Evans, vol. 2, p. 26.) These were very small and all of them together only "counted a number in England of undoubtedly 150 persons." (Evans, vol. 2, p. 25.) Barclay, Inner Life, p. 95, committed the blunder of asserting that the 150 belonged to Murton's church at Newgate and that there were four other churches besides these. The other authorities have followed him industriously. (Dexter, Congregationalism, p. 323; Scheffer, De Brownisten, p. 155.)

For some reason Murton's associates became solicitous to join the Mennonites and sent two commissioners to Holland for the purpose of carrying out that enterprise. (Evans, vol. 2, pp. 24, 25.) These commissioners bore a letter setting forth the items of difference between the followers of Helwys and the Mennonites, of which there were only five, namely, about the humanity of Jesus, about the lawfulness of an oath, about the necessity of celebrating the Lord's Supper every Sunday, whether the ordinances should be administered by lay members, and whether it is admissible for Christian men to hold civil office, and to bear the sword. (Evans, vol. 2, pp. 26–30.) In this letter the English expressly assert that "these are all the differences which we think to exist." (Evans, vol. 2, p. 30.) There was no difference whatever regarding the act of baptism, since both parties still practiced sprinkling and pouring.

After the decease of Helwys, John Murton stood at the head of the movement. He in turn passed away in 1630. At any rate his wife Jane, who was a daughter of Alexander Hogdkin (Scheffer, De Brownisten, p. 81), then went back to Amsterdam to live with her father and mother, these being still alive and members of the Mennonite church. (Evans, vol. 2, p. 50.) On the 26th of September, 1630, she was received into that church with four others, who possibly had returned with her, "because they were

baptized formerly by Mr. Smyth." (Evans, vol. 1, p. 222.) Such an incident presupposes closer relations than could have existed had there been already a controversy as to the act of baptism between the Mennonites and the disciples of Helwys.

Prof. Scheffer affirms that this intimate union continued until the year 1641 when Richard Blunt went to Rhynsburg, and receiving immersion at the hands of John Batten, returned to England and imparted it to the members of his church. "By that act," he adds, "the bond of fellowship with the Netherland Mennonites was first broken off, because from that moment forward the Mennonites were regarded as unbaptized people." (De Brownisten te Amsterdam, p. 156.)

After surveying these facts Dr. Evans, by all means the best equipped of English Baptist historians, is much staggered regarding the point in question. He cites the statement of the editor of Robinson's works, who declares that "nothing appears in the controversial writings of Smyth and Helwys to warrant the supposition that they regarded immersion as the proper and only mode of administering the ordinance," and adds, "in this opinion Dr. Muller fully agrees. But was it so? We cannot pronounce positively, but are bound to confess that the probabilities are greatly in its favor." (Evans, vol. 2, p. 52.) On another page he says: "Upon the cause of the deputation to Hol-

land (sending of Richard Blunt) we have commented already. Most will now see that the practice of the Mennonite brethren (sprinkling) was common in this country. These 'new men' soon cast them into the shade and their practice speedily became obsolete. Immersion as the mode of baptism became the rule with both sections of the Baptist community." (Evans, vol. 2, p. 79.)

It will now be appropriate to consider certain objections that have been urged against the conclusion that the people later known as General Baptists in England employed only sprinkling or pouring for baptism prior to the year 1641.

The first of these is found in a fabulous statement under the pretended date of March 24, 1606, as follows: "This night at midnight Elder John Murton baptized John Smith, vicar of Gainsborough in the river Don. It was so dark wee were obliged to have torch-lights. Elder Brewster prayed and Mr. Smith made a good confession. Walked to Epworth in his cold clothes, but received no harm. The distance was over two miles. All our friends were present. A strong wind, but faire above-head. To ye triune God be all ye praise." Dexter, True Story, p. 66.

This fabrication originated among the General Baptists of Lincolnshire, England, and purports to be a transcript from the "Ancient Records" of the Church of Christ, meeting at Epworth, Crowle and West Butterwick. No sadder humiliation has ever

been inflicted upon our Baptist name and cause. The fact that it could be put forth under the auspices of Rev. John Clifford, M.A., LL.B., reflects a painful light upon the condition of studies in Baptist history among the Baptists of England. Copious extracts from it appeared first in the General Baptist Magazine, London, 1879, p. 327 and p. 438, of which Mr. Clifford was editor. As if that were not sufficient to fill up the cup of our mortification, a volume was subsequently issued to set it forth anew under the title of "The English Baptists, Who they Are and What they have Done. Edited by John Clifford, M.A., LL.B., London, E. Marlborough & Co., 1881."

This fable has been sufficiently exposed by Dr. H. M. Dexter, (True Story of John Smyth the Se-Baptist, Boston, 1881, pp. 63–86,) and the justice of his representations is acknowledged by scholars everywhere. Prof. Scheffer declares, (Overzicht, p. 42, note 3,) that "he has demonstrated beyond refutation that the so-called 'Ancient Records' are nothing else than an unworthy instance of deception." It would carry us too far to enter into all the details of this fraud, and we must be content in this place merely to show that its authority cannot stand against the well established authority of contemporary history.

The assertion that John Murton baptized John Smyth, vicar of Gainsborough, in the river Don on

the 24th of March, 1606, is contradicted by the testimony of John Smyth himself. In his work entitled, Parables, Censures, Observations, Aperteyning, etc., printed in 1609, and written certainly after March 24, 1606, Mr. Smyth denounces the Anabaptists in a way to demonstrate that he could not yet have been one of them. On pp. 13 and 14 he says: "I demaund of you: do you think that God accepteth the prayers and Religious Exercises of the Papists, the Arrians, *the Anabaptists*, the Familists or any other heretiques or Antichristians? if not what is the true cause that God accepteth them not? is it not that there is not that true communion of the Saynts there, the true Spouse of Christ, the Spiritual Temple where God hath provided his presence?" If Smyth had joined the Anabaptist party in 1606, he could not have classed them with "Papists, Arrians, Familists and other heretiques or Antichristians" in a work written more than a year later.

Furthermore this deception can not outweigh the authority of Mr. Smyth himself when he confesses that he baptized himself. It has been shown above that this step was performed in October, 1608, and that before the month of March, 1609, he had repented the act and was knocking at the door of the Mennonite Church in Amsterdam for admission. In the archives of that church is still preserved a confession of sorrow for their disorderly conduct in baptizing themselves, which is composed in the Latin

language, *in the handwriting of Smyth* (Scheffer, De Brownisten, p. 128, note 2), and subscribed by himself and thirty-one of his followers. This is found printed somewhat incorrectly in Evans, vol. 1, pp. 244–5, and an English translation is also given, Evans, vol. 1, p. 209. A correct copy is published by Scheffer, De Brownisten te Amsterdam, p. 128. Dr. Dexter has inserted it in a note at the foot of page 31 of the True Story of John Smyth, including one of the blunders made by Evans. It may be translated as follows: "Names of the English people who acknowledge this their error and repent of the same, namely, *that they undertook to baptize themselves* contrary to the order established by Christ, and who now desire to unite with *this true Church of Christ* with all possible expedition." Here Mr. Smyth concedes that he baptized himself.

In the Character of the Beast, printed in 1609, p. 58, he also concedes this point: "If all the commandments of God must be obeyed, then this of baptism, and this warrant is sufficient for assuming baptism. Now, *for baptizing a man's self there is as good warrant as for a man's churching himself;* for two men singly are no church, jointly they are a church, and they both of them put a church upon themselves; for as both these persons unchurched, yet have power to assume the church, each of them for himself and others in communion, so each of

them unbaptized hath power to *assume baptism for himself* with others in communion." (Hanbury, Historical Memorials Relating to the Independents, London, 1839, vol. 1, p. 267, note.)

Again, in the Last Booke of John Smyth as printed in Barclay's Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth, as an appendix to chapter VI. the following statements are found on page V.: "Thirdly, Master Helwys said that although there be churches already established, ministers ordained and sacraments administered orderly, yet men are not bound to join those former churches, but may, being as yet unbaptized, *baptize themselves (as we did)* and proceed to build churches of themselves. .....Only this is it which I held, that seeing there was no church to whom we could join with a good conscience to have baptism from them, *therefore we might baptize ourselves.*"

In view of these three confessions by Mr. Smyth that he baptized himself it is vain to appeal to the fraud that has been foisted upon our Denomination by the English General Baptists. This is the first instance in our history where resort has been had to such unworthy means to support our cause. Let us trust in God that it shall also be the last.

The Mennonite ministers whose church he was trying to join also admit that Mr. Smyth baptized himself. They desired their brethren with whom they corresponded on the subject of receiving Smyth

and his followers: "to take into consideration and distinguish the baptism of those that are baptized by their minister himself, for we ourselves do distinguish the act of baptizing *by which he has baptized himself*; this is an affair quite different." (Evans, vol. 1, p. 213).

If Mr. Smyth and his friends both unite in the admission that he baptized himself the case will become only so much stronger when his opponents join their testimony to the volume of proof. Witnesses from that side are too numerous and circumstantial to be cited in this place, and it must suffice to refer to such men as John Robinson who was present in Amsterdam when the occurrence took place, Religious Communion, 1614, Ashton's ed., p. 168; Henry Ainsworth, also present, in his Defence of the Holy Scriptures, Worship, etc., 1609, p. 69 and p. 82; R. Clyfton, also present, in his Plea for Infants, 1610, Answer to Epistle, and divers other writers.

The second objection is drawn from the case of Mr. Leonard Busher, who in his work entitled Religion's Peace or a Plea for Liberty of Conscience, published by the Hanserd Knollys Society, Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, London, 1846, p. 59, says: "And such as shall willingly and gladly receive it (the Word), He hath commanded to be baptized in the water, that is dipped for dead in the water." It is sometimes too confidently assumed that this passage

proves Mr. Busher to have been an immersionist in practice as well as in principle, but we know too little regarding him to venture distinct assertions on that point. He was a citizen of London, as appears from the title of his book, and a *faithful and loving subject of the king of England* (Religion's Peace, p. 26), whose ancestors may have come from Holland (Evans, vol. 1, p. 229, note) and who himself had connections there. He was also an Anabaptist, and, with his followers, resided in Amsterdam. Dr. Dexter (Congregationalism as Seen in its Literature, New York, 1880, p. 322, note 117) says: "Matthew Saunders and Cuthbert Hutton, in their letter to Johnson's church (Lawne's Profane Schisme, etc., p. 56), under date of 8 July, 1611, speak of three kinds of English Anabaptists then in Amsterdam, viz: 'Master Smyth, an Anabaptist of one sort, and Master Helwise of another, and Master Busher of another.'" He also was residing in the Netherlands while engaged in writing his book, which it will be remembered was first published in 1614. On page 77 of that work he says: "I read that in the Netherlands above a hundred thousand persons have been put to death for religion. But now, praised be God, we have no such woful tidings preached *among us* (in Holland). The Lord work as much in our land (England) I beseech him! that so you may no longer burn and banish the servants of Christ." He was glad to lead a peace-

able and quiet life in the Low countries, but he deplored the fact that his majesty's faithful subjects could not do this *even in their own nation* (pp. 79–80).

Was the first edition of his book in 1614 published at London or at Amsterdam? Hitherto it has been impossible to discover an edition earlier than that of 1646, and hence this question can not be answered. Did he ever return from Holland to England? That inquiry must also be left unsolved. If he failed to return to England at all he does not come within the range of the present inquiry, which refers only to that country. The act of baptism observed by him would in that case become a question for Dutch archaeologists. But either Dutch or English archaeologists, founding on the mere fact that he was an immersionist in principle, must jump a long distance to the conclusion that he was also an immersionist in practice. It is clear that he had small respect for the labors of Helwys at Newgate in London, not being willing to recognize Helwys' church as a "right visible congregation" (Religion's Peace, p. 25), but that opposition might have resulted, not from the circumstance that they practiced sprinkling while he practiced immersion, but possibly because they were Arminians and he was a Calvinist. In brief words, Mr. Busher is a shadowy figure, and it is entirely uncertain whether he spent his last years in England or Holland. Therefore, we are not enti-

tled, for the present at least, to establish any definite conclusions regarding him or his people, except that if he had practiced immersion at Amsterdam in 1611 we should have been likely to hear a good deal more about him than has been brought to light hitherto.

I have already shown in Chapter III. that none of the Anabaptists of Holland were in the practice of immersion prior to the year 1620 at which time the rite was introduced again into that country by John Geesteranus at Rhynsburg. The most that can be safely claimed for Mr. Busher is that he was an advance herald of genuine Baptist principles in Holland, that were shortly to be reduced to practice in England. His Calvinistic views would in due time naturally commend his views regarding immersion to the favorable attention of the Jessey church, when they in their turn should set about considering that subject.

The last objection is drawn singularly enough from Dr. Featley's Dippers Dipt, which stands among the books of the period that are most distinct in asserting that immersion was a splinter new practice in England in the year 1644, when it first came from the press. The argument is given on page 441 of the History of the Baptists by Dr. Armitage, New York, 1887, and is mended and improved on p. 458. A passage is there chosen from page 3 of the Epistle Dedicatory where Featley is describing the practices of the Anabaptists at the time when he wrote, namely

in 1644, the book having issued from the press on the 10th of January of that year. (Crosby, 1, 304.) He relates as follows: "They flock in great multitudes to their Jordans and both sexes enter into the Rivers and are dipt after their manner..... And as they defile our Rivers with their impure washings and our pulpits with their false Prophecies and Phanaticall Enthusiasmes, so the presses sweat and groane under the load of their blasphemies." Then passing over nearly three pages and coming to a connection where nothing is said about immersion he selects the following passage "This venomous Serpent (vere Solifuga)..... is the Anabaptist who in these later times first showed his shining head and speckled skin and thrust out his sting near the place of my residence, for more than twenty years." Dr. Featley in the last sentence undertakes to declare that the Anabaptists who were at that period in the practice of sprinkling had showed themselves near the place of his residence more than twenty years previously, while in the first two sentences he describes the practice that they had only recently introduced, "*since the waters were troubled*" and the nation had been thrown into confusion. The argument of Dr. Armitage to the effect that the Anabaptists, according to Dr. Featley, had been engaged in dipping for more than twenty years near the place of his residence is therefore inadmissible. The authority to which he

refers intends to convey no such impression. On the contrary, in another place, Preface to the Reader (near the close), he gives a distinct note of time indicating the exact period at which dipping commenced. "But *of late*," he says, "*since the unhappy distractions which our sins have brought upon us, the Temporall Sword being other ways employed and the Spirituall locked up fast in the Scabbard*, this sect among others hath so far presumed upon the patience of the State that it hath held weekly Conventicles, rebaptized hundreds of men and women together in the twilight, in Rivelets and some arms of the Thames and Elsewhere, dipping them over head and ears." The unhappy distractions here mentioned began in England in 1640. It was only after that time that the "Temporall Sword was other ways employed and the Spirituall was locked up fast in the Scabbard." When Dr. Armitage cites this last passage in page 458 of his History, the note of time is omitted and he charges that Featley "contradicts himself several times." The facts will not sustain this charge; Dr. Featley does not contradict himself. Everything that he utters anywhere in his volume conforms strictly with the statement made, Dippers Dipt, London, 1644, p. 187, where he is discussing the Fortieth Article of the Baptist Confession of Faith, that prescribes "dipping or plunging as the way and manner of administering the ordinance of baptism." In that place he declares:

"This Article is wholly sowsed with *the new leaven* of Anabaptisme. I say *the new leaven, for it can not be proved that any of the ancient Anabaptists maintained any such position*.....It is not essentiall to Baptisme, neither doe the texts in the margent conclude any such thing. It is true John baptized Christ in the River, but the Text saith not that either the Eunuch or Christ himself, or any baptized by John or his Disciples, or any of Christ's Disciples were dipped, plunged or dowsed over head and ears, as this Article implyeth and our Anabaptists *now* practice."

Once more; Dr. Featley resided in Southwark, just south of the Thames, in London, where he had two livings, one the rectory of Lambeth and the other of Acton. (Neal, History of the Puritans, Boston, 1817, vol. 3, p. 320.) But the Jessey Church was also situated in Southwark, and it was there that Featley held the famous debate with the Anabaptists in 1642 which became the foundation of the work known as the Dippers Dipt. The Jessey Church was therefore in the immediate vicinity of the Doctor's residence, and some of them may have known him very well. Mr. Kiffin, one of his opponents in the debate, had been a member of the Jessey Church down to the year 1641, at which time he joined the Baptists. (Gould, Open Communion and the Baptists of Norwich, Introduction, p. cxxviii.)

The statement of the Jessey Church Records is

positive and unqualified—"none having then so practiced in England to professed believers." It embraces the whole of England in general, and in particular every foot of the Borough of Southwark, where Dr. Featley and they lived as neighbors together and seems to exclude the notion that anybody could have been practicing immersion in the Borough for more than twenty years. On the other hand, the declaration by Featley is not positive and unconditional: it is a mere inference drawn by putting together certain statements that he has made in different portions of his volume.

The Borough in those days may have contained as many as seven or ten thousand inhabitants. If anybody had been immersing at Lambeth, near Dr. Featley's residence, for more than twenty years there is scarcely one chance in a million that the men of the Jessey Church would not have become aware of it. And there is scarcely one chance in ten millions that Dr. Featley, who was an outsider, should have heard of these immersions, while the men of the Jessey Church remained in ignorance of them.

In view of all these considerations I am not able to attach any importance to the claim that Dr. Featley teaches that the Anabaptists had been immersing near the place of his residence for more than twenty years. In fact I cannot perceive that he has made such an assertion: I prefer to stand

by the positive unconditional assertion of his immediate neighbors in the Borough of Southwark when, in 1640, they assert—"none having then so practiced in England to professed believers."

The facts above set forth are all in harmony with the representations contained in the Records of a Church of Christ, meeting in Broadmead, Bristol, 1640–1687, Hanserd Knollys Society, London, 1847. These Records were composed by Mr. Edward Terrill, an honored Ruling Elder, who was born in 1634 or 1635 (Records, p. 63, note) and joined the church in 1658 (Records, p. 57). He began the labor of writing down the Records in the year 1672 (Underhill's Introduction to Records, p. xciv; cf. Records, p. 47). As he was only five or six years of age in 1640, when the events he describes began to take place, he was not an eyewitness of them. It was thirty-two years after the earliest of them occurred before he set pen to paper. Nevertheless his account may be accepted as, perhaps, substantially accurate.

He says "that in the year of our forever blessed Redeemer, the Lord Jesus (1640), one thousand six hundred and forty, those five persons, namely Goodman Atkins of Stapleton, Goodman Cole, a butcher of Lawford's Gate, Richard Moone, a farrier in Wine Street, and Mr. Bacon, a young minister, with Mrs. Hazzard, at Mrs. Hazzard's house at the upper end of Broad Street, in Bristol, they met together and came to a holy resolution to separate from the wor-

ship of the world and times they lived in.....

"Shortly after this on a time called Easter, because Mr. Hazzard could not in conscience give the Sacrament to the people of the parish, he went out of town and took that season to visit his kindred at Lyme. And at that juncture of time the providence of God brought to this city one Mr. Canne, a *baptized* man. It was that Mr. Canne that made notes and references upon the Bible. He was a man very eminent in his day for godliness and for reformation in religion, having great understanding in the way of the Lord." (Broadmead Records, pp. 17,18.)

"And on the Lord's day following he preached at a place called Westerleigh, about seven miles from this city; and many of the professors from hence went thither to hear him, with Mrs. Hazzard, willing to enjoy such a light as long as they could; where he had liberty to preach in the public place called a church in the morning, but in the afternoon could not have entrance. The obstruction was by a very godly, great woman that dwelt in that place, who was somewhat severe in the profession of what she knew, hearing that he was a baptized man, by them called an anabaptist, which was to some sufficient cause of prejudice; because the truth of believer's baptism had been for a long time buried, yea for a long time by popish inventions, and their sprinkling brought in the room thereof." (Broadmead Records, p. 19.)

Rev. Charles Stovel has published an excellent biography of Mr. Canne in the volume entitled, A Necessity of Separation from the Church of England Proved by the Nonconformists Principles. By John Canne, Pastor of the Ancient English Church in Amsterdam. Hanserd Knollys Society, London, 1849. This learned author is an adept in Puritan chronology as the same is employed by Mr. Terrill in the Broadmead Records. Referring to the passages I have given above, Mr. Stovel says: "When introduced to us in the Broadmead Records at Easter, after 1640, that is April the 25th, 1641, he [Mr. Canne] appears to have been received as a man who was well known, and eminently respected. .... When he could gain access to the public place of worship he used it; and when driven out because he was 'a baptist'—'a baptized man'—he retired to the Green,—meeting the opponents by reasonings not to be refuted, and, everywhere, speaking with fervor and effect to an awakened empire." (Introductory Notice, pp. x,xi.) In a chronological arrangement of his life (Introductory Notice, p. xxviii) Mr. Stovel says: "1641, Canne is at Bristol, April 25." This would agree to a nicety with the fact that Blunt had begun the practice of immersion in Southwark, London, early in the year 1641, after his return from Holland, whither he had gone to obtain it in 1640. Mr. Canne, who was well acquainted in Southwark, appears to have submitted to the ordinance very

promptly in 1641, and was in time to reach Bristol by the 25th of April, 1641.

In the year 1643 are found traces of immersed believers in Bristol (Records, pp. 30,31), and in 1652 there is evidence of the existence of a church (Pithay) of which all the members were immersed (Records, p. 41); and in the year 1653 some baptisms are mentioned as administered in a river (Records, p. 42). The following quotation from the Records, p. 92, will show that at the date mentioned there was a regular place in Frome River for the rite of immersion: "These ten men and four women were all fourteen baptized together one after another, the sixth day of the first month 1666 [1667], in the evening, at Baptist Mills, in the river by Mr. Thomas, minister." It will be observed that the title "Baptist Mills" is first employed in the Records twenty-five years after the introduction of immersion into England in 1641.

Prof. Masson, in his Life and Times of Milton, London, 1873, vol. 3, p. 104, says that "Helwys' folk differed from the Independents not only on the subject of infant baptism and dipping, but also on the power of the magistrate." It is true that Helwys and his people differed from the Independents on the subject of infant baptism, but as was shown above, they did not differ on the subject of dipping. On the contrary, they were in accord with the Independents in practicing sprinkling and pouring for bap-

tism. The work of Masson was issued three years before that of Barclay on the Inner Life of the Religious Societies of the Commonwealth, which marks a distinct advance in Baptist history. Masson had great learning, but he had given no special attention to this department, and his views were entirely those of traditional writers on the subject. They do not require to be considered in this place. His blunder is due to nothing else than the circumstance that he had not become aware of the progress that has been made in recent years in this line of research.

V.

GENUINE ANCIENT RECORDS.

AN instrument of writing designated as the Kiffin manuscript has played a large role in our Baptist history. The name of the author is entirely unknown. It has been traditionally ascribed to Wm. Kiffin, who was a prominent character among English Baptists, and left behind a manuscript account of his life, selections from which have been published by Ivimey, (History of the English Baptists, London, 1814, vol. 2, pp. 297–322). No writer on Baptist history has ever rejected the authority of this manuscript, and down to a comparatively recent period none of its statements were subjected to criticism.

I recently undertook some researches in this field which were rewarded by finding a still earlier manuscript on the same subject. It was rescued by Rev. George Gould from amongst the manuscripts of Mr. H. Jessey, who in 1637 became pastor of the Ancient Independent Church that had been founded at London in 1616 by Mr. Henry Jacobs, and bears the following title: "The Records of an Ancient Congregation of Dissenters, from wch many of ye Independent and Baptist Churches in London took

their first rise." (Gould, Open Communion and the Baptists of Norwich, Introduction, pp. cxxi and cxxii.) These singularly valuable records, which must be still in existence since Gould had them in his possession in 1860 (Open Communion, Introduction, p. cxxiii), ought by all means to be published in *fac-simile*, and whoever accomplishes that task will render an important service to Baptist history. Mr. Gould prints only "certain entries" found in them (Introduction, p. cxxii), and these do not quite cover all the ground occupied by the so-called Kiffin manuscript. To facilitate comparison both documents will be found printed in parallel columns below, the one under the title of Jessey Church Records and the other as the so-called Kiffin manuscript.

JESSEY CHURCH RECORDS.

1633. There haveing been much discussing, These denying Truth of ye Parish Churches, and ye Church being now become so large yt it might be prejudicial, These following desired dismission, that they might become an Entire Church, and (2) further ye Communion of those Churches in Order amongst themselves, wch at last was granted to them, and performed Sept. 12, 1633, viz.

Henry Parker & wife.	Jo. Milburn.
Widd. Fearne.	Arnold.
[Green] Hatmaker.	Mr. Wilson.
Mark Luker.	Tho. Allen.
Mary Milburn.	

To These Joyned Rich. Blunt, Tho. Hubert, Rich. Tredwell, and his Wife

SO-CALLED KIFFIN MANUSCRIPT.

There was a congregation of Protestant Dissenters of the independant Persuasion in London, gathered in the year 1616, whereof Mr. Henry Jacob was the first pastor; and after him succeeded Mr. John Lathorp, who was their minister at this time. In this society several persons finding that the congregations kept not to their first principles of separation, and being also convinced that (1) baptism was not to be administered to infants, but such only as professed faith in Christ, desired that they might be dismissed from that communion, and allowed to form a distinct congregation in such order as was most agreeable to their own Sentiments.

The church considering that they were now grown very numerous, and so more than could in these times of persecution conveniently meet together, and believing also that those persons acted from a principle of conscience, and not obstinacy, agreed to allow them the liberty they desired, and that they

Kath., John Trimber, Wm. Jennings and Sam Eaton, Mary Greenway, (3) Mr. Eaton wth some others receiving a further Baptism.

Others Joyned to them.

1638. These also being of ye same Judgment wth Sam Eaton, and desiring to depart and not be censured, our intrest in them was remitted, wth Prayer made in their behalf, June 8, 1638. They haveing first forsaken Us, and Joyned wth Mr. Spilsbury, viz.

Mr. Peti Ferrer.	Wm. Batty.
Hen. Pen.	Mrs. Allen (died 1639).
Tho. Wilson.	Mr. Norwood.

Gould *Open Communion and the Baptists of Norwich*, Intro. p. cxxii.

1640. 3d Mo [May]. The Church [whereof Mr. Jacob and Mr. John Lathorp had been Pastors], became two by mutual consent, just half being with Mr. P. Barebone, and ye other haife wth Mr. H. Jessey. (8) Mr. Richd Blunt wth him, being convinced of Baptism, yt also it ought to be by diping ye Body into ye Water, resembling Burial and riseing again, Col. II., 12; Rom. VI., 4: had sober Conferance about it in ye Church, and *and then wth some of the forenamed, who also were so convinced*: And after Prayer and Conferance about their so enjoying it, *none having then so practiced in England to professed Believers*, and hearing that some in the Nether Lands had so practiced, they agreed and sent over Mr. Rich'd Blunt (who understood Dutch) wth Letters of Comendation, who was kindly accepted there, and Returned wth Letters from them, Jo. Batten a Teacher there, and from that Church to such as sent him.

1641. They proceed on therein, viz. Those persons yt ware perswaded Baptism should be by dipping ye Body, had mett in (9) two Companies, and did intend so to meet after this: all these agreed to proceed alike togeather: and then Manifesting (not by any formal Words) a Covenant (wch Word was Scrupled by some of them) but by mutual desires and agreement each testified: These two Companyes did set apart one to Baptize the rest, so it was Solemnly performed by them.

Mr. Blunt baptized Mr. Blacklock, yt was a Teacher amongst them, and Mr. Blunt being baptized, he and Mr. Blacklock Baptized ye rest of their should be constituted a distinct church; which was performed the 12th of Sept. 1633. And as they believed that baptism was not rightly administered to infants, so they looked upon the baptism they had received in that age as invalid: whereupon most or all of them received a new baptism. (5) Their minister was Mr. John Spilsbury. What number they were is uncertain, because in the mentioning of the names of about twenty men and women it is added, *with divers others*.

In the year 1638 Mr. William(6) Kiffin, Mr. Thomas Wilson, and others being of the same judgment, were upon their request, dismissed to the said Mr. Spilsbury's congregation.

(7) In the year 1639 another congregation of Baptists was formed, whose place of meeting was in Crutched—Fryars; the chief promoters of which were Mr. Green, Mr. Paul Hobson and Captain Spencer.

Crosby, vol. 1, pp. 148-9.

For in the year 1640, this church became two by consent; just half, says the manuscript, being with Mr. P. Barebone, and the other half with Mr. Henry Jessey.

Crosby, vol. 3, p. 41.

Several sober and pious persons belonging to the congregations of the dissenters about London were convinced that believers were the only proper subjects of baptism and that it ought to be administered by immersion or dipping the whole body into the water, in resemblance of a burial and resurrection according to Colos. II., 12 and Rom. VI., 4. That they often met together to pray and confer about this matter and to consult what methods they should take to enjoy this ordinance in its primitive purity: That they could not be satisfyed about any administrator in England, to begin this practice; because tho' some in this nation rejected the baptism of infants, yet *they had not as they knew of revived the ancient custom of immersion*: But hearing that some in the Netherlands practiced it, they agreed to send over one Mr. Richard Blunt, who understood the Dutch language: That he went accordingly carrying letters of recommendation with him and was kindly received both by the church there and Mr. John Batten their teacher.

That upon his return he baptized

friends yt ware so minded, and many being added to them they increased much."

Gould, *Open Communion and the Baptists of Norwich*, Intro. pp. cxxiii, cxxiv.

Mr. Samuel Blacklock, a minister and these two baptized the rest of their company, [whose names are in the manuscript to the number of fifty-three].

Crosby, vol. 1, pp. 101-2.

It will be apparent even upon casual observation that the second of the above papers is either derived from the first or from independent tradition of the facts set forth in the first. It is, therefore, confessedly inferior to the contemporary record, but it is still not unworthy of the confidence that has always been bestowed upon it.

It may be entertaining to observe the items in which the later account varies from the earlier. These items will be indicated by figures set down in the text above to which like figures will correspond in this place. In describing the events of the year 1633 the later account lays greater emphasis upon (1) opposition to infant baptism which is twice definitely alluded to, whereas the earlier merely speaks of "much discussing, these denying Truth of ye Parish Churches," presumably in divers other points as well as regarding infant baptism.

(2) The seceding church demanded that they should be retained by the Congregationalists in "ye Communion of those Churches in Order amongst themselves," whether the same were situated in England or Holland or America; but that has very naturally faded out of the later account entirely. (3) The earlier account says, "Mr. Eaton wth some

others receiving a further baptism"; the later account makes somewhat elaborate explanations to the effect that "as they believed that baptism was not rightly administered to infants, so they looked upon the baptism they had received in that age as invalid: whereupon *most or all of them* received a new baptism." In point of fact only a small proportion of them appear to have received a further baptism. This constitutes an instance of exaggeration, but it is hardly of sufficient consequence to invalidate the authority of the later account.

(4) Mr. Samuel Eaton, the leader in procuring a further baptism in 1633 was also prominent in that regard in 1638, according to the earlier account. Is it possible that he is the same Samuel Eaton who became pastor of the Congregational Church at New Haven, Conn., when it was established on the 22d of August, 1639, (Dexter, Congregationalism, p. 413, note; cf. p. 587, note) and returning to England in 1640 founded the Congregational Church at Duckingfield (Dexter, p. 635, note).

(5) The later account has blundered in asserting that John Spilsbury was minister of the church at the time of its secession in 1633, but the earlier renders it clear that he was acting in that character in 1638. (6) It has also blundered in asserting that William Kiffin joined Spilsbury's church in 1638. That was the year in which he "united with an Independent congregation" (Ivimey, 2, 304) which must

have been Mr. Jessey's church. The earlier account shows that he did not join Spilbury's church at this time, and I have found no contemporary evidence that he ever at any time belonged to it.

(7) What the later account says about the formation of a church in Crutched-Fryars in 1639 may be correct or it may not. Nothing in the earlier gives support to it, and Dr. Dexter (Congregationism, pp. 649–50) appears to claim Mr. Green (who is set down among the members of Crutched-Fryars Church) as a Brownist. The omission of many names and dates in the later account is a striking feature. It is here that the earlier everywhere vindicates its superiority. Let it be observed that the term Baptist as applied in this connection to a religious Denomination occurs in the later and not in the earlier account.

The second division of the Jessey Church Records, beginning with the disruption of Jessey's church in 1640, is perhaps the most important. That disruption would appear to have been occasioned by the circumstance that one section of the church were inclined to move more rapidly in the direction of reform than the other. Those who desired to remain upon the strictly Independent foundation hitherto occupied by the church rallied to Mr. P. Barebone, while those who were willing to travel beyond that position gathered about the regular pastor, Mr. Jessey.

(8) Mr. Richard Blunt who had gone forth with the secession in 1633, had meanwhile returned to Mr. Jessey's church and in 1640 sided with the party of the pastor. In addition he had become "convinced of baptism yt also it ought to be by diping ye Body into ye Water, resembling Burial and riseing again, Col. II., 12 and Rom. VI., 4." Why should he have been inclined to lay stress upon this particular argument, among so many others, in favor of immersion? That was the argument and those were the passages of Scripture urged in support of immersion by Leonard Busher (H. K. Soc. Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, pp. 59, 60). Were these brethren acquainted with Busher's Treatise on Religion's Peace, and did they know anything about the author of it? If they knew him they were aware that he had not introduced immersion into England, for they expressly declare that "*none had then so practiced in England to professed believers.*" If he had spent his last days in Holland as was intimated above, they perhaps knew also that he had not introduced immersion there, for they sent to the Collegiants and not to Busher or his followers to obtain it. The apparent connection between Blunt and Busher at this point may be thought to lessen the possibility that Busher had ever been an immersionist in practice.

(9) There were, according to the earlier records, "two companies" who introduced immersion into

England. Richard Blunt and his friends in the Jessey Church on the one part first "had sober conferance about it *in ye Church.*" After that they also had conference "*wth some of the forenamed,*" who were all members of Mr. Spilsbury's church. In 1641 these two parties "had mett in two companies and did intend so to meet after this," and these "two companies" did each set apart one to baptize the rest, Mr. Blunt baptizing those from the Jessey Church, and Mr. Blacklock those from the Spilsbury Church, after Mr. Blacklock had first received baptism from Blunt, who in his turn had received it in Holland.

The general result of our investigation is that these two documents complement and mutually support each other. The earlier demonstrates that the later is not far astray, while the later casts a better light upon the earlier and imparts additional force and certainty to its statements.

Certain items rise above others in importance in these documents. The first of these is the positive statement under the year 1640 found in the Jessey Church Records regarding immersion: "*none having then so practiced in England to professed believers.*" In the other manuscript that point is less definitely expressed as follows: "*they could not be satisfyed about any administrator in England to begin this practice; because though some in this nation rejected the baptism of infants, yet they had not as they knew of re-*

vived the antient custom of immersion;" but even that is sufficiently definite to express a clear idea.

In the earlier account we have the unqualified assertion of the most important document in the history of Particular Baptists that prior to the year 1640 nobody at all had practiced in England the immersion of professed believers. The Anabaptists had not practiced it, who came over from Holland in the sixteenth century. The followers of Helwys and Murton had not practiced it. Spilsbury and his people, who seceded in 1633, had not practiced it. Nobody else had practiced it. That is not the word of an adversary. It expresses the understanding which the people themselves who introduced immersion into England had of the situation under which they acted. There is a possibility that they may have been mistaken in their claim; but after two hundred and fifty-five years of careful investigation no scholar has been found to rise up and show that they were in error, and until somebody shall have accomplished that feat their word must be allowed to stand. They were men of intelligence; their interests were much concerned; they must have made careful inquiry; they understood whereof they affirmed, and their testimony applies first of all to the Borough of Southwark which they inhabited in company with their immediate neighbor, Dr. Daniel Featley.

The other leading item is that Mr. Blunt was sent

to Holland in 1640 to obtain immersion; that he went to John Batten, well known as a teacher among the Collegiants, and, receiving the rite at his hands, returned to England. Here he was instrumental in reviving immersion by procuring the ordinance to be administered to "two companies," one of which had been derived from the church of Mr. Spilsbury and the other from the church of Mr. Henry Jessey. In my opinion these facts thus clearly established by the two most important and valuable documents, all things considered, that are connected with our history, constitute irrefragable proofs that immersion was introduced into England in the year 1641. Here is an unquestionable account of a complete change. Prior to 1641 the followers of Helwys and Murton on the one hand and the followers of Spilsbury on the other were in the practice of sprinkling or pouring for baptism; in the year 1641 immersion was fetched out of Holland and a new epoch was introduced. There is no chance anywhere to evade that plain conclusion. If it may not stand secure, then the study of history is a delusion; no fact of history can ever be established.

VI.

EIGHT MONUMENTS OF THE INTRODUCTION OF IMMERSION INTO ENGLAND IN THE YEAR 1641.

THE Jessey Church Records prove that immersion was introduced into England in the year 1641. That was an important change. In all cases where important changes occur it is to be anticipated that historical monuments of some kind will be left behind to indicate that they took place. One of the most prominent monuments of this change is the Fortieth Article of the *Confession of Faith of the Seven Congregations or Churches of Christ in London, 1644*, prescribing immersion as follows: "That the way and manner of the dispensing of this ordinance is *dipping or plunging the body under water;* it being a sign must answer the things signified, which is that interest the saints have in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ; and that as certainly as the body is buried under water and risen again; so certainly shall the bodies of the saints be raised by the power of Christ in the day of the resurrection to reign with Christ."

The *dipping or plunging the body under water* as applied to believers is here for the first time prescribed by an English Confession of Faith, and the

year 1644 agrees with the Jessey Church Records, which represent that immersion was first introduced in 1641. If immersion had previously been in use, it is very hard to understand why it should not have been required in any of the previous Confessions. The reason why it was first prescribed in 1644 is to be found in the fact that it was not in use in England until 1641. The Confession of 1644 is an enduring monument to the change that was made in 1641.

The Confession above mentioned, which for the first time prescribes dipping, also carefully specifies the manner in which it shall be performed, as follows: "The word baptizo signifies to dip or plunge (yet so as convenient garments be both upon the administrator and subject with all modesty)." Manifestly this direction about clothing was added because it was to be apprehended that some might administer the ordinance without having convenient garments upon the administrator and subject. That circumstance indicates that the rite was still so new to them that the manner of performing it was as yet unsettled. Such precautions are not appended to Baptist confessions in our day, because at present the way and manner of dispensing the ordinance of baptism are so well understood that it can not be anticipated that either the subject or the administrator shall be without suitable garments. But they must have been necessary on this occasion. This provision likewise accords with the Jessey Church Records,

which show that immersion was first introduced into England in 1641, and it is a monument of the recent change from sprinkling to immersion.

That the name Baptist first came into use shortly after 1641, is another evidence of the fact in question. The name Anabaptist had long been resented. The brethren frequently designated themselves as those who were "unjustly called Anabaptists" (Crosby, vol. 2, Appendix, p. 51). But so long as their contention related merely to the subjects of baptism they could never shake off the name Anabaptists. Their act of baptism being the same as that employed by other Christians, namely, pouring and sprinkling, it was always described as a mere repetition of baptism—as Anabaptism. But when another act was introduced, namely, immersion, it then became possible for the brethren to obtain a new designation. Henceforth they were called "baptized Christians" *par excellence*, and in due time Baptists. The earliest instance in which this name occurs as a denominational designation, so far as my information goes, befell in the year 1644, three years after immersion had been introduced. The Anabaptists Groundwork for Reformation, 1644, p. 23, says: "I ask T[homas] L[amb] and the rest of those Baptists, or Dippers, that will not be called Anabaptists (though they baptize some that have been twice baptized before) what rule they have by word or example in Scripture, for their going men and women to-

gether into the water and for their manner of dipping, and every circumstance and action they perform concerning the same." (Dexter, True Story, p. 56). Baillie, in "Anabaptism the True Foundation of Independency, etc.," London, 1646, p. 30, says: "Many more of their women do venture to preach among the Baptists than among the Brownists in England." (Barclay, p. 157.)

3) Another instance in which the name occurs, belongs to the year 1654, when Mr. William Britten published a work entitled The Moderate Baptist; briefly showing the Scripture-way for that initiatory sacrament of baptism, together with divers queries, considerations, errors and mistakes, in and about the work of religion. Wherein may appear that the Baptists of our times held not those strange opinions as many heretofore have done, etc. (Crosby, vol. 1, p. 254.) In the same year R. Farnsworth issued an address: "To you that are called by the name of Baptists or Baptized people, etc." (Dexter, True Story, p. 97.) Cotton Mather in the Magnalia, Hartford, 1820, vol. 2, p. 459, represents what seems to have been the true state of the case when he says, "Now they declared our infant baptism to be a mere nullity and they arrogate unto themselves the title of *Baptists*, as if *none were baptized but themselves.*" The name Baptist was in 1644 first claimed by our people. They have claimed it ever since.

4) Another monument is the baptismal controversy.

It began shortly after 1641. Hitherto the Christian world had moved almost together in reference to the act of baptism so that there had been small occasion for a baptismal controversy. For twelve centuries they had stood so unitedly in favor of immersion that the act of baptism was little discussed. For four centuries later Western Christendom had moved so uniformly in the direction of pouring and sprinkling that men seldom contended for the original usage. But now that a body of Christian people had risen up to stem the tide of innovation and sail against the current, there was serious business on hand. When Edward Barber sent forth "A Small Treatise of Baptisme or *Dipping*" a new note had been struck. The man was here asserting against the whole of Western Christendom that baptism is synonymous with dipping; that there is no other baptism but *dipping*. He aimed to show "that the Lord Christ ordained Dipping" and not sprinkling or pouring. The claim that immersion is the *only valid act* of baptism had been a long while unknown in England.

A. R. expressed the idea still more distinctly on the title page of his "Treatise of the Vanity of Childishe Baptism . . . . . wherein is also proved that *Baptizing* is Dipping and Dipping is *Baptizing*." In other words he contended that immersion is *the exclusive* act of baptism. For ages before this time that contention had not been urged in England. Here began the earliest notes of that baptismal con-

troversy which is still with us. This controversy opening at least as early as 1642 is a monument of the introduction of immersion, an event, which according to the Jessey Church Records took place in 1641. Prior to that date no English books have been instanced which were written for the special purpose of proving that *immersion alone* is baptism; after that date such works abound in England. Nobody wrote in favor of immersion as the *exclusive act of baptism* prior to 1641, for the reason that nobody in England at that period practiced immersion alone for baptism: divers wrote in favor of it after 1641, for the reason that people began to practice it there in 1641. The case of Leonard Busher does not furnish an exception since it cannot be proven that his work was published in England. Besides it is devoted to another subject, and contains only a brief reference to dipping.

Another evidence of the introduction of immersion 1641 is contained in the fact that before that time no instances are found where churches were divided on this issue. They divided on other issues but not upon this one. After 1641 it was not unusual for churches to divide about immersion. B. Ryves in Mercurius Rusticus, Oxford, 1646, p. 22, gives a description of the condition of affairs at Chelmsford in Essex, and informs us that: "Since this Magnified Reformation was set on foot this towne (as indeed most Corporations, as we find by

experience are Nurceries of Faction and Rebellion) is so filled with Sectaries, especially Brownists and Anabaptists that a third part of the people refuse to communicate in the Church-Lyturgie, and halfe refuse to receive the blessed Sacrament, unlesse they may receive it in what posture they please to take it. They have amongst them two sorts of Anabaptists; the one they call the Old Men or *Aspersi*, because they were but sprinkled: the other they call the New Men or the *Immersi* because they were overwhelmed in their Rebaptization."

N. Homes in his Vindication of Baptizing Believers' Infants, etc., 1645, p. v. says: "One congregation at first adding to their Infant Baptisme the adult baptisme of sprinkling: then not resting therein, endeavoring to adde to that a dipping, even to the breaking to pieces of their congregation." (Dexter, True Story, pp. 47–8, note.) These divisions are indications of the fact that immersion had been introduced as asserted by the Jessey Church Records in 1641. Many of the brethren would refuse to submit to the innovation and these drew away to themselves, leaving the immersion party in control of the ground. Reasons are not wanting to support the conclusion that the separation between the simple Anabaptists and the Dippers was not completed until about the year 1660 (Crosby, 3, 77). In some cases it "broke to pieces the congregation," while in others it resulted in the formation of "Open Bap-

tist'' churches, some of which still remain in England as a monument of the introduction of immersion.

Prior to 1641 the followers of Murton and Helwys were in close relations with the Mennonites, and in 1626 a movement was set on foot looking to the organic union of the two parties (Evans, vol. 2, pp. 24–30). After the year 1641 those relations were entirely broken off, and it is claimed by the best Mennonite scholarship that this alienation was caused by the introduction of immersion. The Mennonites being henceforward recognized as unbaptized people were not disposed to continue the fellowship and friendship that had hitherto prevailed. (Scheffer, De Brownisten, p. 156). That separation was one of the striking monuments of the rejection of pouring and sprinkling, which had always been practiced by Mennonites, and of the adoption of immersion.

Another monument of the fact that immersion was introduced into England in 1641 is found in the alarm that was occasioned shortly afterwards respecting the effect of the ordinance upon the health of the people who should submit to it. No records have been produced of the existence of any such feeling prior to the year 1641, for the reason that no such custom as immersion then existed in England; but after 1641 the apprehension was very sincere, even though it was not very just. It was experienced by such men as Richard Baxter and Walter Cradock,

and was also considerably prevalent among the common people, who sometimes supposed that the Baptists were a cruel and murderous sect merely because they used immersion. In the year 1646 Mr. Samuel Oates was tried for his life at Chelmsford because Anne Martin died within a few weeks after she had been baptized by him. (Crosby, vol. 1, pp. 236–8.) This was the result of a wild and senseless panic, but it was a panic that occurred because the ordinance was so very new and as yet the public was but little accustomed to it. A panic of that kind never occurred at any other period in English history. After a few years it would have been found impossible to produce an excitement of this sort, since the people had then become better acquainted with the practice of dipping and the effects of dipping upon the health of those baptized.

8) An eighth monument of the change from sprinkling and pouring to immersion, is found in the word "rhantise" which appears then to have first come into use in English. When it first began to be denied that sprinkling was baptizing, it became necessary to declare in learned speech just what it might be. The brethren were put upon distinctions; they were compelled to find a name for sprinkling, and since "baptize" was transferred from the Greek language it was natural to look in that direction. Accordingly the word "rhantize" was chosen. The beginning of this movement in philology appears to

have been made by A. R[itor] in his "Treatise of the Vanity of Childish-Baptisme," London, 1642, p. 11, where he makes use of the original Greek word as follows: "For a learned and approved Author has noted the Greeke wants not words to express any other act as well as dipping: If the institution could beare it, upon Matt. 3,11, for the Greek to sprinkle is ῥαντίζω. Much humane authority, both ancient and moderne, might be produced herein, all which would be needlesse, seeing the Scripture itself is so cleere in the point," etc.

Rev. Christopher Blackwood in his "Storming of Antichrist in his strongest Garrisons, of compulsion of conscience and Infants Baptisme," London, 1644, appears to have improved upon the suggestion of A. R. by transferring the Greek word to English. Thereupon an anonymous author speedily issues a work entitled "Mock Majesty, or the Siege of Muenster," London, 1644, and begins the preface as follows: "To the intelligent Reader, Baptized or *Rantized*: Thou must excuse me for this pretty new-stamped word. It is pitty but it should signify something in English. Whether it do so or no, it is not a week since I first met with it, and that in a way of scorn and contempt of the Baptism of our Church (See Christopher Blackwood in his book entitled the Storming of Antichrist in his two strongest holds, etc., very lately published)." There are other indications in literature that the word was then first

minted. Thomas Blake, who favored and practiced the rite of pouring, says in his "Infants Baptism freed from Antichristianism," London, 1645, p. 4: "I have seen several dipped ; I never saw nor heard of any sprinkled (or as some of you use to speak *rantized.*" (Wall, History, vol. 2, 402). The word "rhantize" is a monument of the change from sprinkling to immersion, that, like the name Baptist, abides with us still.

There are yet other monuments of that great change ; but the eight that I have instanced above will suffice to show that it produced an impression. This impression was not confined to the age in which the change occurred, but marks of it still are apparent in our own age and every one of them is in harmony with the Jessey Church Records which represent that immersion was introduced again into England in the year 1641. In particular, as long as the name Baptist shall be uttered anywhere in the world it will point back with unerring certainty to that famous event in that famous "yeare of jubilee," as Edward Barber phrases it. The name was not in use before that period; it has been constantly applied as a denominational designation to our people ever since that date.

VII.

MR. PRAISEGOD BAREBONE.

THIS excellent person was a contemporary and an eyewitness of the event here under discussion, and he confirms the testimony of the Jessey Church Records in every particular.

Mr. Barebone was a famous and worthy man. Few rise to such heights of influence and usefulness. Born in London in 1596 he became one of the foremost notables of the Puritan party. Mr. Carlyle says: "Praisegod, though he deals in leather, and has a name which can be misspelt, one discerns to be the son of Pious parents: to be himself a man of piety, of understanding and weight—and even of considerable private capital, my witty flunky friends." (Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, New York, 1847, p. 196). He had a spacious private dwelling in Fleet Street where he preached the gospel to a church that was much devoted to the special friend of Cromwell, and in many other ways he made a distinguished figure in the England of his generation.

Some have claimed that he was a Baptist preacher; but Ivimey is not certain on this point (History, vol. 1, p. 157). The Baptist Encyclopaedia on the

contrary has no doubt of the correctness of it. In its biography of him as set forth under his name it styles him a "Baptist minister," "our worthy brother" who was "unquestionably a godly and a great man." High praise from competent Baptist authority.

This great man gave his name to one of the Parliaments of England—that convened by Oliver Cromwell on the fourth of July, 1653. Whether that was done as a tribute to his authority in the Parliament, as the Baptist Encyclopaedia has intimated, or merely as an expression of the popular wit, it was a more important achievement than many men have been able to perform. To be called by Cromwell to sit in the Parliament, was a worthy distinction; to get the Parliament called in his honor was a much higher distinction.

It is true that the Baptist Encyclopaedia has blundered in claiming Mr. Barebone as a Baptist minister, yet it was not a very great blunder. There was some reason for this conclusion, for he was closely connected with the Baptists, having been a member of the Jessey Church prior to the year 1640. When Mr. Jessey began to lean towards the Anabaptists, Barebone resisted him, for the reason that he desired to stand upon the Independent foundation which the Church had occupied from the beginning. He was able to give effect to his resistance by dividing the ancient church and taking just half of it away

from Mr. Jessey in the month of May, 1640, as the Jessey Church Records affirm, leaving the other half to follow Mr. Jessey in due season into the Baptist fold.

It is likely that Barebone knew personally every member of Jessey's Church and had canvassed them over and over again during the schism which he produced in May, 1640. There can be little question that he knew Mr. Richard Blunt by heart. He may indeed have heard something of the project to send him into Holland that he might fetch immersion over seas. At any rate when that practice was introduced among them in the year 1641—"the yeare of jubilee"—Mr. Barebone got upon the track of it almost as soon as anybody else in England. This marked change struck him very forcibly, since adult immersion was unknown in England in 1640. The Jessey Church Records declared with perfect truth and decision "none having then so practiced in England to professed believers," and he knew that every word of it was true. Therefore Barebone confirmed every word of the Jessey Records.

And he was an unexceptionable witness. He had much ability, combined with high station and high character. His information was adequate; nobody outside of the Jessey Church itself was likely to know as much as he knew regarding the transaction. Moreover his friendship for the Baptists was so conspicuous that eminent Baptist writers, still affirm,

though incorrectly, that he was a Baptist minister. Such a witness must command attention and respect when he testifies of the great change that took place just under his eyes. He sat down immediately and wrote the first treatise that appeared against immersion in the baptismal controversy. The full title of his pamphlet is: A Discourse Tending to prove the Baptisme in or under the Defection of Antichrist to be the Ordinanec of Jesus Christ, as also That the Baptisme of Infants or Children is Warrantable and Agreeable to the Word of God, Where the perpetuity of the estate of Christ's Church in the world, and the Everlastingnesse of the Covenant of Almighty God to Abraham are set forth as Maine Grounds, and sundry other particular things are controverted and discussed. By P. B. [Leatherseller in Fleet Street]. London. Printed by R. Oulton and G. Dexter, and are to be sold by Benjamin Allen over against the signe of the Angell in Pope's Head Alley, 1642.

In the copy that was handed me at the Library of the British Museum in the summer of 1880, the words "*Leather-seller in Fleet Street*," which I have inclosed in brackets above, were written with ink upon the title page in the hand of Mr. Thomason, the bookseller who collected the King's Pamphlets. This shows that P. B. stands for Praisegod Barebone, who was famous everywhere in that character. The opinion of Thomason on this point may not be

infallible, but no reason has ever been suggested for calling it in question.

Mr. Barebone's contention is that the baptism which both the Independents and the Anabaptists had received in or under the defection of Antichrist —a baptism by pouring or sprinkling—was the ordinance of Jesus Christ; that it was good enough for all uses, and that there was no kind of propriety in introducing this new baptism by dipping. My citation from the above work as contained in a manuscript copy taken on the spot in July, 1880, is as follows:

"But now very lately some are mightily taken as having found out a new defect in the Baptisme under the defection, which maketh such a nullitie of Baptisme in their conceit that it is none at all, and it is concerning the manner of Baptizing wherein they have espyed such default as it maketh an absolute nullity of all person's Baptisme but such as have been so Baptized according to their new discovery; and so partly as before in regard of the subject and partly in regard of so great default in the manner: They not only conclude as is before sayd a nullity of their present Baptisme, And so but addresse themselves to be Baptized a third time after the true way and manner they have found out, which they account a precious truth. The particular of their opinion and practice is to Dip, and that persons are to be Dipped, all and every part to be under the

water, for if all the whole person be not under the water then they hold they are not Baptized with the Baptisme of Christ. As for sprinkling or pouring water on the face it is nothing at all as they account, and so measuring themselves by these new thoughts as unbaptized they addresse themselves to take it up after the manner of Dipping: but truly they want [lack] a Dipper that hath authority from heaven, as had John whom they please to call a Dipper, of whom it is sayd that it might be manifested his Baptisme was from heaven. A man can receive nothing, that is, lawful authority or power to Baptize, unlesse it be given from heaven, which I desire they would be pleased to mind and they will easily see their third baptism is from the earth and not from heaven as John's was. And if this case be further considered it will appeare at the most to be but a defect in the manner and a coming short in the quantity of the Element. It is a wonderful thing that a nullity should thereof follow forthwith, of which more may be seen in the same case before. Againe that the substance of an Ordinance of so high a nature and great concernment should be founded in the criticknesse of a word and in the quantity of an element is no lesse marveilous, to say no more. Oh but Baptisme is a Buriall as it is written, We are buried with him in Baptisme, etc., and we are raised up also to newnesse of life. This Buriall and resurrection only Dipping can import

and hold forth..... But inasmuch as this is a very new way, and the full growth of it and settling is not yet known, if it be to themselves, yet not to me and others: I will forbeare to say further to it." (pp. 12, 13, 15.)

Let it be remembered that in the year 1640 the Jessey Church Records declare that there was no immersion of adults in England—"none having then so practiced in England to professed believers." They also affirm that in 1641 immersion was introduced from Holland.

This work of Mr. Barebone, written in the year 1642, agrees exactly with those declarations. The above extracts show conclusively that a "*new baptism*" had been "*very lately*" introduced, that it was not the old rebaptism, but involved a "*new discovery*" which related to the "*true way and manner*" of baptizing, and that this "*true way and manner*" was "*to Dip, and that persons are to be Dipped, all and every part to be under the Water.*" In order to avail themselves of this new baptism the parties were compelled to renounce two former baptisms, one administered when they were infants in the Church of England, and the other when they became Anabaptists and joined Mr. Spilsbury's church during or after the year 1633. The reason for renouncing that second baptism is asserted to be that they now accounted "*sprinkling or pouring water on the face to be nothing at all,*" and hence regarded them-

selves "*as unbaptized.*" It was on this account alone that they "addressed themselves to take it up after the manner of Dipping."

If these citations do not demonstrate that up to a period immediately preceding the year 1642, the parties concerned were in the practice of sprinkling or pouring for baptism; that they then made a "new discovery" of the "true way and manner" of baptizing; that this "true way and manner" was by "dipping all and every part of the body under water," and that in order to obtain this "new Dipping" they had to renounce two former baptisms, then human speech is worthless as a vehicle of expression; it will be impossible for anybody to set forth definite ideas by that means. Taken in connection with all the facts about the history of baptism in England and the declarations of the Jessey Church Records, this testimony of Mr. Barebone constitutes an irrefragable proof. No ingenuity of the mind of man can overthrow it.

The above treatise of Mr. Barebone apparently met a speedy reply from the very man who of all others we should expect to enter the list against him. Richard Blunt, who had gone to Holland to obtain immersion took up his pen and probably before the close of the year 1642 issued a printed work which up to this moment, so far as I know, has not been recovered. It might throw a desirable light on these discussions if it could be produced, and it is worthy of

diligent search in many libraries. Its exact title can not be given: all that we know of it is found in the following work by P. B[arebone]: A Reply to the Frivolous and impertinent *Answer of R. B. to the Discourse of P. B.*, in which Discourse is shewed that the Baptisme in the Defection of Antichrist is the ordinance of God; notwithstanding the corruptions that attend the same, and that the Baptisme of Infants is lawful, both of which are vindicated from the exceptions of R. B., and further cleared by the same author [i. e., P. B.]. There is also a reply in way of Answer to some exceptions of E[dward] B[arber] against the same. London, 1643. (Dexter, True Story, p. 88.)

Dr. Dexter supplies a citation from this book, as follows, pp. 19, 30, 31, 61: "*New things* are very pleasant, and many are much taken with them, as is R. B. with *dipping;* about which he taketh great paines, produceth many scriptures, etc. . . . . What should be the cause R. B. hath laboured so much in this matter of dipping, and taken notice of every particular, I leave every man free to judge: for my part, I take it to be, as I said before: *It is new and the man is mightily taken with it.* [He goes on to charge R. B. with] denying the Baptisme of all the Reformed Churches and separed [separated] Churches, and also of all other Christians, Either Reformed or yet in defection, only those *two or three* [Churches] excepted that have *within these two or*

three yeeres or some such time bin totally dipped for Baptisme by persons at the beginning unbaptized themselves." [Further in referring to Barber's book he cites his taunt: "the Church P. B. is a member of was unheard of till within these 200 yeeres," and replied]: "Well; 200 yeeres is some antiquitie, *more than two or three yeeres, such as is the descent of the totall dippers in this kingdome.*" (True Story, p. 49.)

This passage confirms and clinches what Mr. Barebone had reported in the previous book. Dipping was never taken for granted by him. It was always for him a "new thing." The "descent of the totall dippers in this kingdome" of England according to his most accurate information was no longer than "two or three yeeres, or some such short time."

All this harmonizes to a nicety with the Jessey Church Records. That official testimony is confirmed by an authority in this instance that no man can gainsay; distinguished alike for ability, position, opportunities, information and friendly temper towards the Baptists; so friendly that the Baptist Encyclopaedia claims him for a Baptist minister, while it justly honors him as "unquestionably a godly and a great man."

VIII.

SEVEN BAPTIST WITNESSES.

"NONE having then so practiced in England to professed believers." All the Baptist witnesses brought forward here agree with the Jessey Church Records that there was a time in England when the immersion of adult believers had become extinct, while one or two of them will be found to indicate the date when it was introduced again.

1) Edward Barber was a well-known Baptist minister, who in 1641 published a work with the following title: A Small Treatise of Baptisme or Dipping, Wherein is Cleerly showed that the Lord Christ Ordained Dipping for those only that professe Repentance and Faith. 1. Proved by Scriptures. 2. By Arguments. 3. A Parallel Betwixt Circumcision and Dipping. 4. An Answere to some Objections by P. B. Psal. 119, 130. By Edward Barber. Printed in the Yeere 1641.

In this treatise Mr. Barber handles two several propositions, first that the Lord Christ ordained dipping and not sprinkling or pouring as the act of baptism, and second that he ordained dipping for those only that profess faith in Christ and not for

immature infants. Both his positions are duly argued and the discussion is worthy of respect, notwithstanding the fact that the first question had not previously been discussed by any author in England, at least for a very long period of time. The author devotes more space to the discussion of infant baptism, apparently for the reason that to his mind the proofs in favor of immersion were so clear that they did not require to be specially elaborated.

I have a manuscript copy of the material portions of this pamphlet, all that I use in this discussion, but unfortunately it omits to set down the paging of the original, and therefore I shall be compelled to indicate by other means the places whence my citations are drawn. The first of these falls at the beginning of The Preface. The words are as follows: "Beloved Reader, it may seem strange that in these times when such abundance of Knowledge of the Gospell is professed in the World, that there should notwithstanding be generally such ignorance, especially in and amongst those that professe themselves Ministers thereof, of that glorious principle *True Baptisme* or *Dipping*, Ephe. 4, 5, Instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, which all that look for life and salvation by him ought to be partakers of; it being that onely which was received by the Apostles and Primitive Churches, and for a long time unviolably kept and practiced by the Ministerie of the Gospel in the planting of the first Churches, and that the

Lord should raise up mee a poore Tradesman to devulge this glorious Truth, to the World's Censuring."

The author here represents that though abundance of knowledge of the gospel was claimed, yet in the year 1641 there was general ignorance of true baptism or dipping, not only among the laity, but especially among the ministry of the gospel. If there was such general ignorance of the dipping of believers, even among the clergy, the practice could not have been employed in England at that time. Manifestly it had become extinct before that time. That this is his meaning is rendered apparent by the last section of the pamphlet, which is devoted to "An Answere to some Objections by P. B." It has been shown that Barebone had charged that: "truly they want [lack] a Dipper that hath authority from heaven as had John, whom they please to call a Dipper." His objection was that if baptism was extinct, as it was asserted to be, nobody had authority to restore it except one who had received a divine commission for that purpose. To that contention Mr. Barber replied in his "Answere to Some Objections by P. B." as follows: "2. We grant the Ordinance being lost, none but a Christ, a Moses, Elias or a Prophet from heaven can raise it; but beleevers having Christ, the Word and Spirit have this," etc.

Here it is conceded by Mr. Barber that the ordinance was lost, but that believers having Christ, the

Word and Spirit had received a divine commission to introduce it again just as truly as Moses or John the Baptist had received commissions from the Lord.

A little farther on he states the matter with yet more distinctness: "But put the case the Babilonians had destroyed the Lord's Vessels and instead had made them of Brase, Copper, Tin or Lead, whereas they were to be of pure Gold and Silver; had they beene then the Lord's Vessels, or would his people have used them in his service and worship, or brought them backe, Ezra 1. 11, or would the Lord have accepted them for his own Vessels? And thus it stands in truth for the Dipping of Christ, *destroyed and raced out both for matter and forme*, as hath been formerly shewed, the matter being a believer desiring it, the true forme dipping them into Jesus Christ," etc.

Whatever else may be said of Edward Barber, it can never be claimed that in this Small Treatise he takes immersion for granted. That is the very thing that he does not do. On the contrary, he declares in terms that the world was ignorant of it, for the reason that it had been "*destroyed and raced out both for matter and forme.*"

Mr. Barber also indicates the exact time when it was introduced again. His book bears the date of 1641, and in it he claims the distinguished honor "to devulge this glorious Truth to the World's Censuring." Nobody in recent times had divulged it in

England. His book was the first in modern ages to make it known to the English public. The annals of English literature will be searched in vain for a volume that precedes it in date and yet maintains that nothing else is true baptism but immersion. That view was familiar enough in apostolic days; but it had long since been "*destroyed and raced out*" in England. Therefore when Mr. Barber employed the word "divulge" he meant precisely what he said; it suited to a nicety the facts of the situation. It has been claimed that Mr. Barber did not know all the circumstances and that there might have been some instances of immersion upon profession of faith in various portions of the country that he was not aware of; but nobody has anywhere brought forward one of these instances, and until that point is clearly demonstrated it may give us no concern.

At the close of his Preface, Mr. Barber begins his "Small Treatise of Dipping; Wherein is clearly shewed that the Lord Christ ordained Dipping for those onely that profest Faith and Repentance: 1. Proved by Scripture from the Commission of Christ and practice of the Apostles and Primitive Churches." The author's discussion as presented in this the main body of his tract confirms at every point the position I have taken.

His earnest care is to demonstrate at the outset the truth of the first proposition, namely, that the Lord Christ ordained dipping. He accomplished

that design by citing the Saviour's commission as set forth in Matthew and Mark and by *translating* the Greek word baptize which occurs there instead of transferring it into English. He says: "The Lord Jesus Christ in that great Charter of the Holy Gospel, Mt. 28.18.19.20, having received all power in Heaven and Earth, saith, Goe, and make Disciples, all Nations, dipping them in the Name of the Father, and of the Sonne, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.

"And Marke 16.15, he saith: Goe yee into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, he that shall beleeve and bee dipped shall be saved: but he that will not beleeve shall be damned."

This was an excellent argument in favor of immersion as the exclusive mode of baptism. The correct translation of the word baptize in the great commission and other passages of Scripture should always settle the question without further discussion.

Mr. Barber next proceeds to a summing up in which he sets forth both the propositions of his contention as follows: "Thus it is cleare that the Lord Christ commanded his Apostles, and servants of the Gospel, first of all to teach and thereby to gather Disciples: And afterwards to dip those that were taught and instructed in the mysteries of the Gospell, upon the manifestation of their faith: which practice ought to

continue to the end of the world, Matth. 28. 20. Ephs. 4. 5. Heb. 13. 8."

Mr. Barber next presents other proofs drawn from the practice of the Apostles, that dipping is the only mode of baptism as follows: "Secondly, that the Apostles according to this commission of Christ did alwayes practise, Acts 2. 36. 37. 38. Peter lift up his voice and said to the Jewes, Let all the house of Israel know for a certainty, that God hath made this Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ; now when they heard this they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, men and bretheren, whatt shall we doe; Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be dipt every one of you."

Still other passages are brought forward by Mr. Barber to prove that dipping exclusively is true baptism and likewise that it should be administered to believers alone. As the earliest effort made in the England of modern times to show that immersion is essential to Christian baptism it must be conceded that his argument is both direct and effective. A simple translation of the Greek word into the corresponding English ought to be sufficient to convince any mind.

Barber himself was so much pleased with his achievement in this connection and so well persuaded that he had carried his point and convinced all opponents that in the balance of his treatise, which

he devotes to an argument against infant baptism, he almost uniformly takes leave to speak of baptism as dipping and of infant baptism as infant dipping, although he is sensible of the fact that infant dipping was not then customary in the Church of England; for only a few lines below the quotation about "the Dipping of Christ being destroyed and raced out," he adds, "Therefore though in words you denie traditions, yet for the sprinkling of Infants you have no better Arguments."

More extended experience was calculated to teach him that his position could not be carried by storm in this fashion. He opened his fight very bravely; but it was destined to be a longer and a harder fight than he apprehended. Believers' baptism and dipping had both been too long extinct in England to be restored on the spur of the moment: on the contrary it would require ages of patience and exertion to restore them. But the matter of special concern in connection with his pamphlet is that he confesses and declares without any qualification whatsoever that "the Dipping of Christ was *destroyed and raced out both for matter and forme*, as hath beene formerly shewed, the matter being a beleever desiring it, the forme dipping them into Jesus Christ." Whatever quibbles may be raised about other questions none can be raised about this one. The ordinance was extinct in England in 1641, if Barber's authority is worth anything at all, and if the plain-

est statements of fact are capable of being understood by the human mind.

2) As was intimated above, A. R., was the second Baptist author who appeared in defense of immersion in the baptismal controversy of modern ages. To the first edition of the Dippers Dipt, Dr. Featley has prefixed a letter "To my Reverend and much esteemed Friend, Mr. John Downam," in which he sets down the name of A. R. as *A. Ritor.* I have no further acquaintance with A. Ritor; but this information, derived from a contemporary, is worthy of more attention than has been bestowed upon it hitherto. The work of A. R. which comes under notice in this place is entitled: The Second Part of the Vanity and Childishness of Infants Baptisme. London, 1642. On page 29 *of this Second Part*, Dr. Dexter has found the following quotation which demonstrates that A. R. did not take immersion for granted: "If any shall thinke it strange and unlikely that all the godliest Divines and best Churches should be thus deceived on this point of Baptisme for so many yeares together [i. e., as never before to know that true baptism is dipping and dipping alone true baptism]: let them consider that all Christendome (except here and there one, or some few, or no considerable number) was swallowed up in grosse Popery for many hundred yeares before Luther's time, which was not until about 100 yeares agone." (Dexter, True Story, p. 49.)

Apparently he had reference to the general ignorance both among the ministry and laity "of that glorious principle True Baptisme or Dipping" which Edward Barber had remarked upon. That ignorance is conceded; they were "deceived on this point of Baptisme" for the reason that immersion had now become extinct, and sprinkling had been substituted in the place of it. A. R. merely endeavors to explain the process by which such an unhappy change had been brought about. He does not, like Edward Barber, specify the exact time when immersion was again introduced, but we know from other sources that this had occurred before he came forth with his book in the year 1642.

3) Thomas Kilcop, one of the brethren who subscribed the Confession of faith in the year 1644, published A Short Treatise of Baptisme, Wherein is declared that only Christ's disciples or believers are to be baptized, etc., London, 1642. The argument of Praisegod Barebone to the effect that they lacked a Dipper that hath authority from heaven as had John the Baptist, arrested the attention of Mr. Kilcop and he proceeded to answer it by an excellent *argumentum ad hominem* as follows: "Every Scripture that gives you warrant, or any of your judgement, to erect a Church state, gives us the same warrant to erect baptisme, sith the one can not be done without the other, for none can put on Christ (that is visibly by outward profession) but such as

are baptized into Christ," etc. (Dexter, True Story, p. 48).

One of our moderns would have denied out of hand that adult immersion had ever become extinct in England; but Mr. Kilcop knew more about the matter. He conceded that point without any question, and argued that even though immersion had become extinct the Baptists had as much right "to erect baptisme" as the Independents had "to erect a Church state." It would be impossible for a man to urge an argument like this, who took immersion for granted; on the contrary, that was the very thing he did not take for granted. Mr. Kilcop is in exact agreement with the Jessey Church Records in allowing that immersion on profession of faith had become extinct in England.

4) Rev. Henry Denne was a Baptist minister of much learning and worship—our pulpit has rarely enjoyed a more worthy ornament. This excellent brother wrote an able reply to Dr. Featley and Mr. Marshall under the following title: Antichrist Unmasked in two Treatises. The First An Answer unto two Paedobaptists, Dan. Featley, D.D., and Stephen Marshall, B.D. The Arguments for Children's Baptisme opened and answered. The Second, The man of Sinne discovered in Doctrine: The root and foundation of Antichrist laid open. By Hen. Denne. Printed for the Edification of the Church and Information of the world. London, 1645. (April 1st.)

Mr. Denne's testimony is as follows: "When the Woman cloathed with the Sun having the Moon under her feet and a Crowne of twelve Stars upon her head, cryed travailing in birth ready to be delivered, Behold a wonder in Heaven, A great red Dragon having seven heads and ten hornes, and seven crownes upon his heads; And his Tayle drew the third part of the stars of heaven and cast them to the Earth: And the Dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered to devour her childe when she had brought it forth.....Our own experience teacheth us in these our dayes, wherein the shadowes begin to vanish and the night to passe away, and the Sun of Righteousness to draw neare unto our Horizon, How Many adversaries doe now bestirre themselves, with policy and force, etc. .....Among the rest the Church is now travailing ready to be delivered and to bring forth the *Doctrine of the Baptisme of Water*, raked up heretofore in an imitation of Pedobaptisme: The truth of the Ordinance and Institution of the Lord Jesus, lying covered with Custome and Practice and a pretended Face of Antiquity" pp. 1, 2.

This statement made in April 1645 "that the Church was travailing ready to bring forth the doctrine of the Baptisme of Water" agrees admirably with the declaration of the Jessey Church Records that immersion was restored to England first in 1641. That Water Baptisme had been "raked up heretofore in an im-

itation of Pedobaptisme" amounts to a concession that the baptism employed hitherto by Mr. Denne's associates had been an imitation of the rite that then prevailed among the Pedobaptists, which rite was pouring and sprinkling.

5) Mr. John Mabbatt, also one of the parties who subscribed the Confession of Faith in 1644, undertook to reply to the pamphlet of Mr. I. Knutton, entitled: Seven Questions about the Controversie betweene the Church of England and the Separatists and Anabaptists, etc., London, 1644. (Dexter, True Story, p. 89.) In that place (p. 23) Mr. Knutton had said "this opinion [of rebaptizing by dipping] being but *new and upstart*, there is good reason they should disclaime it and be humbled for it." Dexter, True Story, p. 50.) No finer opportunity was ever presented to deny a charge with indignation if it had been untrue. Mr. Mabbatt wrote "A Briefe or Generall Reply unto Mr. Knutton's Answers unto the VII. Questions," etc., London, 1645 (Dexter, True Story, p. 90), in which, on p. 22, he not only fails to deny, but actually concedes the correctness of the allegation, and defends himself by saying: "The Apostles were in their time charged for 'new and upstart' Doctrine by some; should they by good reason therefore disclayme it, and be humbled for it, and so have denyed Christ's doctrine and Truth," etc. (Dexter, True Story, p. 50.) Mr. Mabbatt is here in agreement with the Jessey Church Records

to the effect that none had practiced immersion before 1641. It would have been impossible for him to offer this reply if he had known that believers' immersion had never become extinct in England. He concedes that point without discussion.

When the great change from pouring and sprinkling to immersion was about to be introduced three parties were formed in England. Crosby says one of these believed "that the first administrator should baptize himself and then proceed to the baptizing of others. Others were for sending to those foreign Protestants that had used immersion for some time, that so they might receive it from them. And others again thought it not necessary to baptism that the administrator be himself baptized at least in an extraordinary case; but that whoever saw such a reformation necessary, might from the authority of Scripture lawfully begin it." (Crosby, vol. 1, p. 97.) This latter party is claimed to have comprised the greatest number and the more judicious of the people concerned. (Crosby, vol. 1, p. 103.)

That sort of party alignment would be inexplicable except upon the ground that immersion, which had been in disuse in England was brought forward again about 1641. It consitutes one of the numerous monuments of the change from pouring to dipping. Mr. John Spilsbury stood at the head of this third and largest party. His judgment as set forth in the title of one of his books (Dexter, True Story, p. 95)

was that "the Covenant, not Baptism, forms the Church," namely, that persons who have entered into a church covenant acquire *ipso facto* a right to perform and enjoy every ordinance; or that when the ordinances are lacking they may always be restored by the mere process of setting up a church covenant, since "God's ordinance is the saint's privilege."

Mr. Praisegod Barebone delivered an assault against that position in a pamphlet styled A Defense of the Lawfulnesse of Baptizing Infants, in answer to Something by John Spilsberie against the same. By P. B. London, 1644 (Gould, Introduction, p. cxviii). In that place he says of Mr. Spilsbury: "He holds that a church may be Christ's without Baptism, as in his Book may be seen," and desires him to prove "that ever any unbaptized person after Baptisme was afoot in the world baptized or was authorized for to do it..... And lastly whether his practice of raising and beginning the Church of unbaptized persons, do agree with the primitive practice of our Lord and his Apostles that began the church of baptized matter as before." (Gould, pp. cxviii–cxix.)

If immersion had always been in vogue in England Spilsbury could have resented these charges; but he takes no such position. He tacitly concedes the point that he himself, who was now one of the foremost leaders of English Baptists, was unbaptized and

makes an argument to prove "that baptizednesse is not essential to an Administrator." (Gould, p. cxix.) That position would have been out of the question for a man who was all the while taking immersion for granted. On the contrary he knew that immersion was only recently adopted in England; and that he himself had never received it, though he was daily immersing other people.

Mr. John Tombes, the most learned and able Baptist scholar of that generation, was one of the leading defenders of the position assumed by Spilsbury and his followers, to the effect that it was not necessary to fetch immersion from Holland but that "whoever saw such a reformation necessary, might from the authority of Scripture lawfully begin it." He says in An Addition to the Apology for two Treatises, 1652, p. 10: "If no continuance of adult baptism can be proved, and baptism by such persons is wanting, yet I conceive what many Protestant writers do yield when they are pressed by the Papists to show the calling of the first reformers; that *after an universal corruption*, the necessity of the thing doth justify the persons that reform, though wanting an ordinary regular calling; will justify in such a case both the lawfulness of the minister's baptizing that hath not been rightly baptized himself, and the sufficiency of that baptism to the person so baptized." (Crosby, vol. 1, pp. 104–5). Mr. Tombes does not take immersion for granted. He concedes

an universal corruption such as existed before 1641, when adult immersion was not yet restored in England, and is in agreement with the facts as set forth on that point by the Jessey Church Records.

The above citations constitute a sevenfold cord of Baptist testimony to the fact that the immersion of believers had become extinct in England before the year 1640, and that it was introduced again in the year 1641. It is not the testimony of enemies but the witness of friends who were on the spot, and doing what they could to promote the Baptist interest. Some of them had great learning, and all had exact information. If we cannot trust them about a matter of contemporary fact it is useless to prosecute historical investigations of any sort. We may as well close the books, and proceed to evolve our historical conclusions entirely from our own conciousness without any reference to the events that have taken place in the world.

IX.

SOME OUTSIDE WITNESSES.

TO MY thinking the argument is now complete and conclusive without the addition of another word. But there are certain witnesses standing outside of Baptist circles who are entitled to be heard. It is conceded that they have their prejudices and limitations; but they were eyewitnesses, men of ability and learning, and very capable of confirming truth that has been abundantly established by other testimony. One of these is Dr. Daniel Featley, whose testimony has already been sufficiently discussed in a previous chapter to which the reader is respectfully referred. His book entitled The Dippers Dipt clearly shows that adult immersion was a new practice in England when it was published in 1644.

Another author is Robert Baillie, the full title of whose work is as follows: Anabaptism the True Fountaine of Independency, Brownisme, Antinomy Familisme. And most of the other Errors which for the time doe trouble the Church of England Unsealed. Also the Questions of Pedobaptisme or Dipping Handled from Scripture. In a Second Part of The Dissuasive from the Errors of the Time.

By Robert Baillie, Minister at Glasgow. London, January 4, 1646. On page 163 of the above work Mr. Baillie says: "The pressing of dipping and the exploding of sprinkling is but *an yesterday conceit* of the English Anabaptists. Among the *new inventions* of the late Anabaptists there is none which with greater animosity they set on foot then the necessity of dipping over head and ears; then the nullity of affusion and sprinkling in the administration of baptisme. Among the old Anabaptists, or those over sea, to this day so far as I can learn by their writings, or any relation that yet has come to my Ears, the question of dipping and sprinkling never came upon the Table. As I take it they dip none, but all whom they baptize they sprinkle in the same Manner as is our custome. The question about the necessity of dipping seems to be taken up onely the other year by the Anabaptists of England, as a point which alone as they conceive is able to carry their desire of exterminating infant baptisme: for they know that parents upon no consideration will be content to hazard the life of their tender infants by plunging them over head and ears into a cold river. Let us therefore consider if this sparkle of new light have any derivation from the lamp of the Sanctuary, or the Sun of righteousnesse; if it be according to Scripturall truth or any good reason."

Baillie in the above passage expressly declares that dipping was "*a new invention of the late Ana-*

baptists," "*an yesterday conceit of the English Anabaptists*," "*taken up onely the other year*," "*a sparkle of new light.*" He does not indicate the precise year in which it was introduced, but these expressions agree to a nicety with the position that this event took place only about five years before he published his book. Every word of his testimony confirms the deliverance of the Jessey Church Records to the effect that prior to the year 1640 "none had so practiced in England to professed believers," while in the year 1641 the change from pouring and sprinkling to immersion was duly inaugurated.

Attention is once again cited to the fact that Prof. Scheffer, the latest and most eminent authority in this department, is very largely on the side of Baillie when he affirms that the ancient Anabaptists laid no stress upon immersion, while those over sea at the time when he wrote did not use dipping, but sprinkled all whom they baptized. Of course, it is to be expected that efforts will be made to discredit the testimony of Baillie, but they can not avail. He will always stand as a clear and consistent witness on this point.

The work of Ephraim Pagitt may be cited next, viz., Heresiography, or a description of the Hereticks and Sectaries of these latter times, London, 1645. After describing many other kinds of Anabaptists, Pagitt comes at length to speak of the new-

est sort, namely, the "Plunged Anabaptists." He says: "Yea at this day they have *a new crochet* come into their heads, that all that have not been plunged nor dipt under water, are not truly baptized, and these also they rebaptize: And this their error ariseth from ignorance of the Greek word Baptize which signifieth no more then washing or ablution, as Hesychus, Stephanus, Scapulae, Budeus, great masters of the Greek tongue, make good by many instances and allegations out of many authors," (p. 30).

Certainly it is not possible to affirm of Pagitt that he had never heard of the change from sprinkling to immersion, for he represents the "Plunged Anabaptists" as being a new sort of Anabaptists, and refers in unmistakable language to the "*new crochet*, come into their heads, that all that have not been plunged nor dipt under water are not truly baptized." If this language does not convey the idea that immersion had been only recently introduced when his book appeared in 1645, it would appear to be impossible to convey an idea of that kind by means of human speech.

The last witness to be presented here is William Cooke, and the title of his book is "A Learned and Full Answer to a Treatise intitled The Vanity of Childish Baptisme. Wherein the severall Arguments brought to overthrow the lawfulnesse of Infants' Baptisme, together with the Answers to those

Arguments maintaining its unlawfulnesse are duly examined. As also The question concerning the necessitie of dipping in Baptisme is fully discussed. By William Cooke, Minister of the Word of God at Wroxall in Warwickshire, London, 1644. In this work the author says: "Fourthly, will not this their manner of dipping be found also against the Seventh Commandment in the Decalogue? For I would know with these new dippers whether the parties to be dowsed and dipped may be baptized in a garment or no? If they may then happily the garment may keep the water from some part of the body, and then they are not rightly baptized; for the whole man, say they, must be dipped. Againe, I would aske what warrant they have for dipping or baptizing garments, more than the Papists have for baptizing Bells? Therefore belike the parties must be naked and Multitudes present as at John's baptisme, and the parties men and women of ripe yeares, as being able to make a confession of their faith and repentance," etc., (pp. 21 and 22).

There can be no kind of question that Mr. Cooke had heard of the recent change from sprinkling to immersion. Everything that he brings forward only serves to indicate that it was still new and unsettled. In the year 1644, when he wrote his book, questions about the clothing required in immersion, had to be debated and disposed of, which have never been mooted among our people at a later time. Mr.

Cooke not only refers to some of these, but he expressly calls the parties "*new dippers.*"

In view of the foregoing body of materials, I candidly consider that my proofs are sufficient. This opinion has been confirmed and strengthened by the renewed investigations which I have lately undertaken in order to set forth these proofs. Whatever else may be true in history, I believe it is beyond question that the practice of adult immersion was introduced anew into England in the year 1641. That conclusion must be recognized more and more by scholars who will take pains to weigh the facts presented in the above discussion. It is sure to become one of the commonplaces of our Baptist teaching, and in the course of time men will be found to wonder how any could ever have opposed it. Few other facts of history are capable of more convincing demonstration. Doubts have been cast upon the historical existence of the Emperor Napoleon I. Doubts may be cast upon any event that ever occurred among men; but the vast majority of people will disregard these doubts and accept the deliverances of history when they are once sufficiently proven.

Those cited or quoted are: 1) Dr. Daniel Featley, 1644; 2) Robt Baillie, 1646; 3) Prof. Scheffer; 4) Ephaim Pagitt, 1645; 5) William Cooke, 1644.

X.

FOR GOOD MEASURE.

THE merits of Dr. H. M. Dexter in promoting the recent progress in church history have already been acknowledged. As an antiquarian our country has produced few scholars who could surpass him. His industry was commendable, and wide experience had conferred extraordinary skill. Whoever shall be at pains to follow him to his sources will find that he is also a careful and painstaking workman.

Dr. Dexter was engaged in the labor of investigation at the British Museum and other libraries during a portion of the winter of 1880–1, and was enabled to find a number of authorities which no previous student had brought to light. Those which he has the sole credit of discovering will be thrown together at this place to swell the volume of proof that immersion was introduced into England about the year 1641.

The first of these belongs to the year 1644 and is entitled The New Distemper, written by the Author of the Loyall Convert. Dr. Dexter, who appears to be the only person that has examined this pamphlet, reports that "the whole book takes its name as an attack upon the 'prophanations' of these

dippers." (True Story, p. 50, with note.) Dipping being for the author a "*new distemper*" it is manifest that he did not take it for granted, but was perfectly aware of the change from pouring or sprinkling to immersion which took place in the year 1641.

The quotations from I. Knutton and John Mabbatt found on the same page were instanced in another place and set down to the credit of Dr. Dexter. It will be remembered that Mr. Mabbatt was a Baptist witness. The same remark applies to R. J., the author of Nineteen Arguments proving Circumcision no Seal of the Covenant of Grace.....The Unlawfullnesse of Infant Baptisme, etc., London, 1645. On page 4 of that pamphlet this Baptist writer speaks of "the new Ordinance of Dipping," (True Story, p. 50), showing that he did not take immersion for granted, and that he was perfectly aware of the change that had occurred in the year 1641.

Dr. Dexter also brings forward the performance of J. Saltmarsh entitled The Smoke in the Temple. Wherein is a Design for Peace and Reconciliation of Believers of the several Opinions of these Times about Ordinances, to a Forbearance of each other in Love and Meeknesse and Humility, etc. London, 1645. Mr. Saltmarsh here, pp. 15, 16, speaks of "the dipping them in the water.....as the new baptism," (True Story, p. 50), showing that he was entirely aware of the recent change from pouring and sprinkling to immersion.

The above work received two replies from Baptist authors, one of which has not been mentioned by Dexter in this connection. It was written by Rev. Daniel King, "Preacher of the Word near Coventry," and bears the following title: A Way in Zion, sought out and found, for Beleevers to walk in. Or a Treatise consisting of Three Parts. In the first is proved, 1. That God hath had a people on the Earth, ever since the coming of Christ in the flesh, throughout the darkest times of Popery, which he hath owned as Saints and as his Church. 2. *That these Saints have power to reassume and take up as their right any ordinance of Christ, which they have been deprived of by the violence and tyranny of the man of Sin.* Wherein is cleared up by Scripture and arguments grounded upon Scripture, who of right may administer Ordinances, and amongst the rest the Ordinance of Baptism with water. The II. Part containeth a full and large Answer to 13 Exceptions against the practice of baptizing believers, wherein the former particulars are more fully cleared up, etc. London, 1650. (Ivimey, History 2, 577.)

The power of the Saints "to reassume and take up as their right any ordinance of Christ which they have been deprived of by the violence and tyranny of the man of Sin," points very naturally to the introduction of immersion after the long season during which that rite had fallen into desuetude in England.

The other work in reply to Mr. Saltmarsh was by Rev. H. Knollys, the title of which, according to Crosby, History, 1, 343, is as follows: The Shining of a flaming fire in Zion; an Answer to Mr. Saltmarsh his thirteen exceptions against the grounds of the *new baptism* in his book entitled the Smoke of the Temple, 1646. On page 1 of this volume Mr. Knollys comes to speak of the new baptism and instead of denying the allegation he merely retorts that "Paul's doctrine was called 'new,' although he preached Jesus and the Resurrection" (True Story, p. 50), by which he appears to concede that immersion was new as charged by Saltmarsh, and yet though it had been extinct for a long while in England it had nevertheless been a command and practice of the apostles in the beginning of the Christian era. In that sense at any rate it was not new—an eminently true and proper conclusion.

The next witness is J. Eachard in The Axe against Sin and Error and the Truth conquering, etc., London, 1645, where on page 8 he says: "the Anabaptistes by a new baptisme.....will not communicate with others for they think they are more holy than others, by strictnesse of their order," etc. (True Story, p. 50.) This "*new baptisme*" could not have been believers' baptism for the sprinkling of believers was among the Anabaptists already a very old baptism; it could have been nothing but immersion which so many authorities combine to assert

was introduced again in 1641, and in the year 1645 was still a new affair. Mr. Eachard was almost beyond question aware of the change from sprinkling to dipping.

N. Stephens supplies the next citation from his pamphlet entitled A Precept for the Baptisme of Infants out of the New Testament, etc., London, 1650, where on p. 65 he argues: "If they (the Anabaptists) say that the Commission, Matt. xxviii:19, was their first Administrator's rule, then he must be a Disciple made by ordinary preaching and teaching before he had authority to minister their *new* Baptisme." (True Story, p. 51.) Here is a distinct reference to the change which has been pointed out and emphasized as having occurred in the year 1641.

Rev. John Goodwin is a voluminous and circumstantial witness. The first work in which he treats this subject is Philadelphia: or XL Queries for the discovery of truth in this question; Whether persons baptized after a profession of faith may hold communion with churches.....baptized in infancy? London, 1653. In this performance occur the following expressions: "the brethren of *new* Baptisme;" "the way of *new* Baptisme;" "surprised with a religious conceit of the necessity of *new* Baptisme;" "the children of *new* Baptisme." Pp. 13, 24, 25, 28. (True Story, p. 51.)

The connection of history indicates pretty clearly that this *new baptism* could have been nothing else

than immersion ; but in his next volume the author expresses himself in terms that it is almost impossible to misapprehend. That volume is entitled Water Dipping no Firm Footing for Church Communion, London, 1653, from which Dr. Dexter has drawn such quotations as these: "not simply lawful, but necessary also (in point of duty) for persons baptized *after the new mode of Dipping*, to continue communion with those churches.....of which they were members before the said Dipping;" "the *new mode of Dipping* ;" being actually baptized after the manner of brethren *of new Baptism* ; "the main Pillar upon which the house of our *new Dippers* of men and dividers of Churches is built ;" "I heartily wish for some of them, whom I know, that their *new Baptism* doth not help to diminish their old grace ;" and "for the Mode of the latest and newest Invention".....it is, as far as we are able to conceive by the representation of it made unto some of us, so contrived and so managed that the Baptist who dippeth according to it had need to be a man of stout limbs, and of a very able and active body: otherwise the person to be baptized, especially if in any degree corpulent, or unwieldy, runs a great hazard of meeting with Christ's latter Baptism, instead of his former;" "persons baptized after the *new mode* of dipping." Pp. 1, 5, 11, 26, 39, 89. (True Story, p. 51.)

It would be a difficult task to explain away several

of these statements and represent them as meaning something else than what plainly appears on the face of them. They declare in unmistakable language that in the year 1653 dipping was still regarded as a new mode of administering baptism, and human ingenuity will be as much taxed to find out some other meaning, as in the case of the extracts from Mr. Praisegod Barebone. These as well as those, however, will continue to convey the meaning which is obvious on the face of them.

Mr. Goodwin refers to the subject once more in "*Cata-Baptism* or New Baptism waxing old, an Answer to W. A.," etc., London, 1655, where he speaks of "your new baptism;" "*after the new mode of dipping*;" "Mr. W. A. himself in his' Answer' maketh it matter of exception and complaint, that I sometimes stile his way of Rebaptizing *New Baptism.* And yet heretofore in discussing with a grave Minister of Mr. A.'s judgement in the point of Rebaptizing, and the most ancient that I know walking in that way, finding him not so well satisfied that his way should be stiled Anabaptism, I desired to know of him what other term would please him? His answer was '*New Baptism;*'" Pp. vi, xxx, xxxii. (True Story, p. 51.)

The thing that was unusual about this baptism was the "*new mode by dipping.*" That is so manifest as to require no further explanation. Goodwin can by no possibility be claimed as teaching any-

thing else than the plain facts that a change had occurred but recently in the mode of baptism, and that the new mode was by dipping. Nowhere does he take immersion for granted; he is quite as definite as Mr. Praisegod Barebone in his assertion that dipping was the new mode.

J. Parnell is another witness, who in The Watcher; or the Stone cut out of the Mountain, etc., London, 1655, p. 16, testifies: "now within these late yeares.....they (the Anabaptists) say .....they must be dipped in the water, and that they call baptizing." (True Story, p. 51.)

It would be a marvelous feat to represent that Parnell in this work, published fourteen years after the introduction of immersion, had never heard of the change from pouring and sprinkling. Only "within these late yeares" had that change occurred, and it was perfectly fresh in the memory of all who lived in those times and had ever been conversant with the facts in question.

The next man is J. Watts, whose work is entitled: A Scribe, Pharisee, Hypocrite and his Letter answered, Separates churched, Dippers Sprinkled, or a Vindication of the Church and universities of England, etc.....whereunto is added A narration of a publick dipping, June 26, 1656, in a pond, etc. London, 1657. On page iii of the preface he says: "Dipping was, and is, as I have said, a *New business*, and a *very Novelty.*" (True Story, p. 51.)

By the year 1690 a new generation had appeared on the scene; most of the eye witnesses of the events of 1641 had now passed away. Mr. Thomas Wall then came forward with a work entitled Baptism Anatomized: being Propounded in five Queries, viz.: (1) What Water Baptism is? (2) What is the end for which it is instituted? (3) What giveth right to it? (4) Who are the true administrators of it? (5) Whether it be lawful for a man to baptize himself? London, 1690. As a child of the second generation, Wall fell into certain grotesque blunders, and "mentions a rumor which he had heard some years before in London that Spilsbury visited Holland to be baptized of Smyth." This ignorant assertion was very distasteful to the Baptists of that period who knew that Mr. Spilsbury did not care enough for succession in immersion to turn on his heel to obtain it, to say nothing of making a journey to Holland; that Smyth was not an immersionist and hence could not have bestowed what he did not possess; and that he died in August, 1612, which was at least twenty-three years before Spilsbury comes upon the scene.

Accordingly Mr. Hercules Collins, one of the foremost Baptist pastors of the day, wrote a work entitled Believers-Baptism from Heaven, and of Divine institution; Infants-Baptism from earth and human invention. Proved from the Commission of Christ, etc., with a Brief yet sufficient Answer to

T. Wall's book called "Baptism Anatomized," London, 1690. On page 115 of this volume Mr. Collins says: "Could not the Ordinance of Christ *which was lost in the apostasy be revived*.....unless in such a filthy way as you falsly assert, viz:, that the English Baptists received their Baptism from Mr. John Smyth? It is absolutely untrue, it being well known by some yet alive how false this assertion is." (True Story, p. 44, note.)

This Baptist minister here concedes that the ordinance of Christ had been "lost in the apostasy" and that it had been "revived." His position is in substance the same as that of Edward Barber, who in 1641 declared that the ordinance had been "destroyed and raced out both for matter and forme" and that he had been raised up to "devulge" it "to the world's Censuring." Mr. Collins stood at the turn of the seventeenth century, having passed away in the year 1702, sixty-one years after the introduction of immersion among his people, and yet the facts were still well known to him and he without embarrassment conceded the loss of immersion and its revival in England.

Throughout this discussion it must have become apparent to all how the testimony of Baptist authors who were eyewitnesses of the events coincides with that of authors of other Denominations regarding the point in question. They have no hesitation in confessing the facts of the case; they make no efforts

to conceal or misrepresent them. It would be an interesting item in the further progress of this discussion if a competent scholar should find out the earliest date when Baptist writers began to be dubious of this notable transaction, and should bring forward the details of the process by which it gradually became customary to ignore, and at last to deny the great event that occurred among our people in the "yeare of jubilee."

I believe that I may now safely leave my cause in the hands of candid readers. Every fact is in harmony with the position that believers' immersion, after it had been sometime disused, was introduced into England again in 1641. Immersion had not been practiced for a lengthy season in the Church of England; it was unknown among the Anabaptists of England, who had all come over from Holland in the sixteenth century ; it was not practiced by the Mennonites or by the followers of John Smyth, Thomas Helwys and John Murton ; it was introduced, according to the Jessey Church Records, in 1641 by two companies, one of which belonged to the Jessey Church and the other to the Church of Mr. Spilsbury ; the monuments of the change from sprinkling and pouring to immersion are very numerous, and some of them (as for instance the name Baptist) are very well known ; it was testified to almost immediately by Mr. Praisegod Barebone, a highly competent witness, who stood so close to the Baptists that

he is claimed as a Baptist minister by so good an authority as the Baptist Encyclopaedia; the fact is likewise affirmed by the Baptist Edward Barber, who glories that it was given to him "to devulge this glorious truth" to a world that lay in ignorance, and divers other Baptist writers have just as little hesitation in conceding the point; it is also definitely asserted by some very prominent and worthy men of other religious Denominations who were conversant with the circumstances and possibly as capable of telling the truth about them as were their Baptist fellow christians.

What more needs to be said? The testimony of Baptists and Pedobaptists alike conspires to this one end, and it is consistent in every particular. There is a great cloud of witnesses, and yet not a discordant note has been uttered. Among contemporary writers not one has been found who could report an indubitable instance of the immersion of a believer prior to the year 1641 among the Anabaptists of England. These points comprise a cumulative argument which impresses my own mind with much force, and in my opinion entitle me to declare that the proofs to show that immersion of believers was introduced into England in 1641 are irrefragable proofs.

The men who performed this great service deserve to be held in everlasting remembrance. They rescued from destruction, at least in the English speak-

ing world, one of the most significant and solemn ordinances of the apostolic age. They preserved to succeeding ages a knowledge of the baptism of Jesus Christ. Their courage and faithfulness should receive unstinted acknowledgment. We cannot be grateful enough for the patience and strength with which they stood in their lot and served their generation by the will of God. Let us endeavor to imitate their virtues and follow them as they followed Christ.

The names of John Spilsbury, Edward Barber and Richard Blunt should be inscribed upon our tablets, and everywhere crowned with distinction. They were faithful to apostolic truth. They resisted the tide of innovation. They restored an ancient landmark. Surely these noble men have been neglected too long. They merit more generous treatment at the hands of the great and widely extended Denomination of Christian people who for so long a period have enjoyed the benefits of their labors. They dared to stand against a nation that had fallen away from the truth of God in this particular. They saw the truth and had the courage to proclaim it in the face of a gainsaying generation. They have set an example of faithfulness to God's Word that has since been imitated by multitudes of men and women, some of whom have gladly gone to prison because they held Baptist principles to be Bible teaching.

1) "The New Distemper," 1644; 2) "R. J.", 1645; 3) J. Saltmarsh, 1645; 4) Daniel King, 1650; 5) H. Knollys, 1646; 6) J. Earl 1645; 7) N. Stephens, 1650; 8) John Goodwin, 1653; 9) J. Parnell, 1655; 10) J. Watts, 1657; 11) Thomas Wa 1690; 12) Hercules Collins, 1690.

APPENDIX.

BAPTISM OF ROGER WILLIAMS.

MOST men, even the greatest, will be children of the age and country in which they are born and reared. The Reformers, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, though their names stand among the foremost in the annals of Protestantism, were no exceptions to this rule. It has been shown, for example, that each of them accepted the act of baptism that prevailed in his own time and country. Luther's preferences, it is conceded, turned in favor of immersion, but he yielded to circumstances that he was powerless to control.

Roger Williams was likewise a very important personage; but he was not great enough to stand above the common lot of humanity. Like Calvin, Zwingli and Luther, he was a child of the age and country in which he lived; and his age was a hundred years later than the age of the Protestant Reformers. Sprinkling and pouring for baptism, which already in the generation of the Reformers were too well established to be overthrown, had now become still more firmly fixed in the customs and preferences of Western Christendom.

Moreover the religious people with whom Mr.

Williams in the earlier portion of his life was most intimately connected have not distinguished themselves by any special inclinations towards the rite of immersion. It has been a peculiarity of the Reformed or Presbyterian Church ever since the time of Calvin to exhibit comparatively little concern whether immersion should be retained or not. The divines at Westminster in the year 1644, five years after Mr. Williams had severed his connection with the men of that school, refused to permit immersion to stand in the Directory for Public Worship by the side of sprinkling even as an alternate form of administering the ordinance. The question before the body was "Whether sprinkling being granted, dipping should be tolerated with it," (Whole works of John Lightfoot, D.D., London, 1824, vol. xiii, p. 299), and this question was decided in the negative, an act which amounted to the abolition of immersion for baptism as far as that particular communion was concerned.

There is no conclusive evidence to show that the opinions of Mr. Williams on this point were different from those of the men with whom he had hitherto been in sympathy. Attention has been called to the case of Rev. Charles Chauncey, who arrived at Plymouth in May, 1638, bringing with him sentiments that were quite extraordinary among persons of the Puritan school. Gov. Winthrop says: "Our neighbors of Plimouth had procured

from hence (England) this year, one Mr. Chauncey, a great scholar and a godly man, intending to call him to the office of a teacher; but before the fit time came he discovered his judgment about baptism, that the children ought to be dipped and not sprinkled, and he being an active man and very vehement, there arose much trouble about it. The magistrates and other elders there, and the most of the people, withstood the receiving of that practice. (Winthrop, History of New England from 1630 to 1649. Boston, 1825, vol. 1, p. 330.)

But nobody has shown that Mr. Williams regarded the view of Chauncey with any sort of favor at the time when it was advanced. For aught we know to the contrary he may have felt a prejudice both against the man and his contention. The record also declares that Chauncey's judgment was "that the children ought to be dipped and not sprinkled." The immersion of adults was practically a lost art in England and America at this time, and it is conceivable that Mr. Chauncey did not contemplate the immersion of adults. Possibly it would have been difficult to find a single white person of adult age in New England who had not received baptism in infancy. If the record can be depended upon, his contention related to the dipping of infants exclusively, and not to the dipping of adults. The baptism of adults for which Mr. Williams began to contend in the spring of 1639 was so widely

different from the baptism of infants, for which Chauncey was striving, that the act of immersion in the one case need not to have suggested the act of immersion in the other.

Moreover the Anabaptists with whom Mr. Williams was uniting his fortunes in the year 1639 had not yet begun the practice of immersion in England. They were still spoken of everywhere, both in England and America, as Anabaptists, and nowhere at all as Baptists. Is there any *a priori* reason for supposing that he was in advance of them in this regard? It has been suggested that he was a person of unusual independence of mind, but has any proof ever been given to show that his independence was employed in this particular direction?

The earliest contemporary record of the baptism of Williams is furnished by Winthrop under date of March 16, 1639. He says: "At Providence things grew still worse; for a sister of Mrs. Hutchinson, the wife of one Scott, being infected with Anabaptistry, and going last year to live at Providence, Mr. Williams was taken (or rather emboldened) by her to make open profession thereof, and accordingly was rebaptized by one Holyman, a poor man late of Salem. Then Mr. Williams rebaptized him and some ten more." (Winthrop, vol. 1, p. 293.) Another contemporary account was given to Dorchester Church by Rev. Hugh Peters, pastor of Salem Church, under date of July 1, 1639, in which

he acquaints them with the fact that their "great censure was past upon Roger Williams and his wife, Thomas Olney and his wife, John Throgmorton and his wife, Stukely Westcot and his wife, Mary Holliman and the widow Reves, and that all but two of these were rebaptized." (Backus, History 1, 107.) The above statements do not contain a distinct assertion that Mr. Williams was sprinkled. The word "rebaptized" may not *positively* settle the question regarding the act employed ; but in the mouth of Governor Winthrop and of Hugh Peters that word could hardly point to anything else than to the act of sprinkling or pouring. If immersion had been employed in the spring of 1639 it seems likely that definite allusion would have been made to what was at the time an entirely unusual method of administering the ordinance in England or America. The unusual course of Mr. Chauncey in advising the dipping of infants was plainly indicated ; it is difficult to understand why the still more unusual course of Williams in practicing the dipping of adults should not have been likewise plainly described by the same author. The best explanation of this silence on the part of Winthrop seems to be found in the fact that Mr. Williams did not employ immersion.

Six years after the baptism of Williams had taken place at Providence he published a tract entitled Christenings make not Christians, or A Briefe Discourse concerning that name Heathen, commonly

given to the Indians. As also concerning that great point of their Conversion. Published according to order. London, Printed by Iane Cox, for I. H., 1645. This work was recovered by Dr. Dexter at the British Museum in March, 1881, and has been reprinted as Number XIV. of the Rhode Island Historical Pamphlets.

When he comes to discuss the conversion of the Indians Mr. Williams first describes the wrong way to go about it and afterwards the right way. The way of the Catholic Church is duly set forth as the wrong way. Another wrong way is indicated as follows: "Thirdly, for our *New England* parts, I can speake uprightly and confidently, I know it to have been easie for my selfe, long ere this, to have brought many thousands of these Natives, yea the whole country to a far greater Antichristian conversion than ever was heard of in America. I have reported something in the Chapter of their Religion, how readily I could have brought the whole Country to have observed one day in seven; I adde to have received a Baptisme (or washing) though it were in Rivers (as the first Christians and the Lord *Jesus* himselfe did) to have come to a *stated Church meeting*, maintained priests and formes of prayer and a whole forme of Antichristian worship in life and death, (p. 11.)"

The expression "Baptisme (or washing) *though it were in Rivers*" indicates that this form of the ordi-

nance was unusual in 1645. In the year 1643 Mr. Williams made a visit to England to procure a charter for Rhode Island. Here he had found occasion to become acquainted with immersion that had been brought in in 1641. It is evident that he regards it as something unusual—"though it were in Rivers"—yet he concedes that it was what "the first Christians and the Lord Jesus himself did." But the question before us is whether it was what Mr. Williams himself did? Had he submitted to that act in 1639 when he was rebaptized at Providence? Even after he had been enlightened and persuaded that the first Christians and the Lord Jesus himself were immersed would he then have been willing to be immersed himself? Multitudes have no scruples whatever in conceding that immersion was the primitive act of baptism who will not recognize the slightest obligation to submit to the rite themselves. That is the position of almost the entire body of Pedobaptist scholars in European countries. These persuade themselves that the mode, as they phrase it, is a concern of no consequence, and hence they claim liberty to alter it if they choose.

After having set forth the wrong method to convert the Indians Mr. Williams next undertakes to describe the right method. He says: "Secondly, affirmatively: I answer in generall, A true Conversion whether of *Americans* or *Europeans* must be

such as those Conversions were of the first pattern either of the Jewes or the Heathens ; That rule is the golden *Mace wand* in the hand of the Angell or Messenger, rev. 11.1, beside which all others are leaden and crooked.

In particular: First, it must be by the free proclaiming or preaching of Repentance and forgivenesse of sins, Luke 24, by such as can prove their lawfull sending and commission from the Lord Jesus to make Disciples out of all nations: and so to baptize or wash them, εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, into the *name* or *profession* of the holy Trinity, Mat. 28.19; Rom. 10.14, 15."

In the first citation above Mr. Williams had conceded that immersion was practiced by the first Christians and our Lord, and yet in this place, where he is laying down the proper method of converting the Indians he ignores immersion entirely. It is sufficient to "wash them into the name or profession of the holy Trinity" and is not necessary to "wash them in rivers" as was indicated above. This second citation appears to prove that Mr. Williams did not regard immersion as essential to Christian baptism. In brief words, he had heard of immersion during his visit to England, and possibly had witnessed the ordinance performed, but he here decides against it. He ignored it as decidedly as if no such practice had been there introduced anew in the year 1641. In view of this circumstance it is not easy to believe that he had submitted to it in 1639.

If it should be objected that the phrase "wash them into the name or profession of the holy Trinity" points to immersion, we may reply that this would be a just contention if Mr. Williams had added, as in the first instance, some allusion to rivers in which the ordinance should take place. He has here omitted that specification, apparently of set purpose.

The word "wash" that is here made use of is the same word as is employed for baptism by the Westminster divines in the Larger and Shorter Catechisms published in 1648, where it indisputably points to sprinkling or pouring. The Larger Catechism reads as follows: "What is Baptism? Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," etc. The Shorter Catechism says: "Baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ," etc. Both of these passages are parallel to the one before us, and it provides for sprinkling or pouring just as certainly as they do. It would hardly be natural to suppose that a man who wrote thus in 1645 had been immersed in 1639.

If any should urge that Mr. Williams employs the expression "wash them, εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, *into* the name or profession of the holy Trinity," laying emphasis upon

the preposition "into," as indicating that the washing was to be done by immersion, that would be an unwarranted inference. Mr. Richard Clyfton, the well-known Brownist, who always employed sprinkling for baptism, makes use of the same expression in his Plea for Infants and Elder People concerning their Baptisme (p. 173), as follows: "Without this washing with water *into* the name of the Father, etc., it can not be baptisme." (Dexter, True Story, p. 25.) Indeed this author also says, Plea for Infants, p. 159: "Concerning the forme of baptism, I confess it is the sprinkling of a fit subject with water *into* the name of the Father," etc. (Dexter, True Story, p. 25.) The circumstance that the preposition "into" is employed in the same way after the word "sprinkling" as after the word "washing" renders it clear that in neither case is immersion the necessary or natural meaning. Consequently when Mr. Williams declares that to baptize is the same as to "wash them into the name or profession of the holy Trinity," it appears almost certain that pouring or sprinkling was the act of baptism which he recommends. If he had favored immersion, he would most likely have specified that the washing should be done in rivers, as he concedes that "the first Christians and the Lord himself did."

The letter to Gov. Winthrop under date of November 10, 1649, also suggests that the baptism of Williams in 1639 was not administered by immer-

sion. He says: "At Seekonk a great many have lately concurred with Mr. John Clarke and our Providence men about the point of a new Baptism and the manner by dipping, and Mr. John Clarke hath been there lately (and Mr. Lucar) and hath dipped them. I believe their practice comes nearer the practice of our great Founder, Christ Jesus, than other practices of religion do, and yet I have not satisfaction neither in the authority by which it is done, nor in the manner." (Publication of the Narragansett Club, vol. vi., p. 188, Providence, 1874.)

Providence Church under the direction of Williams had submitted to a baptism in 1639. Newport appears to have taken like action under Mr. Clarke in 1641, at which time the Congregational Church over which he had for several years presided, went to pieces, and Winthrop reports that divers on the Island "turned professed Anabaptists." Before 1649 both Mr. John Clarke and the Providence men had "concurred about the point of a new baptism." The manner of that new baptism he states was by the uncommon method of *dipping*, which suggests pretty clearly that the manner of the other baptism had not been by dipping. Mr. Williams had no part in the new baptism by dipping, for he expressly describes it as "their practice" and not as his own practice, which must have been something very different.

Mr. Lucar, who had been immersed in 1641 when Blunt brought back the rite from Holland (Gould,

Introduction, p. cxxiv.), and who may have come to Rhode Island when Williams returned with the charter in 1644, supplies the best solution of all questions here involved. Mr. Lucar is supposed in turn to have brought immersion to America. In the year 1648, according to Hubbard's manuscript he was one of fifteen members of Newport Church. Prof Newman (History, p. 50) has also called attention to Mr. Lucar as a link between the earliest Particular Baptist Church in England and the Church at Newport. If Mr. Williams had introduced immersion into New England in 1639, his language as cited above is inexplicable. He tacitly yields that honor to others by declaring that it was a "new Baptism" and that it was "*their practice*" and not his own. The honor of being the first genuine Baptist on the continent of America appears to belong to Mr. Lucar. The men of Providence had thought of sending Thomas Olney, the successor of Williams in the pastoral office, as far as Hungary to obtain the ordinance from immersing Anabaptists in that country (Backus, 1,112), but they finally concurred with Mr. John Clarke and they were all immersed, as is supposed, by Lucar. This may have been accomplished in 1644. The manuscript of Samuel Hubbard, who joined Newport Church in 1648, says that the church was formed about 1644 (Backus 1, pp. 149–50, note).

Let it be observed that even though he allows

that "their practice came nearer the practice of our great Founder Christ Jesus than other practices in religion do, yet he had no "satisfaction neither in the authority by which it is done, nor in the manner." Mr. Williams remained only four months with Providence Church and then retired because he had become a Seeker, or one who looked and sought for a prophet divinely commissioned to introduce the ordinances anew after the long defection of Antichrist. For that reason he could not be satisfied with the authority by which immersion had been adopted at Providence and Newport. It is possible on the other hand that he could not find satisfaction in the manner, for the reason that while he admitted that immersion was scriptural and apostolical he could not convince himself that it was essential to baptism. At any rate that was the position he occupied in 1645 when writing his tract entitled Christenings make not Christians.

To recapitulate: here are four important contemporary utterances. One of these by Winthrop and another by Hugh Peters occurred in the same year in which the occurrence took place. Both of these appear to testify against immersion, since they used no other term but "rebaptized." A short while afterwards when Gov. Winthrop was describing the practice of Rev. Charles Chauncey he employs the phrase "dipped and not sprinkled," and there can be little question that he would have employed it here if Mr.

Williams had practiced immersion. The two other contemporary utterances are by Mr. Williams himself. That of the year 1645, found in Christenings make not Christians, appears to show that while he conceded immersion was the practice of our Lord and the first Christians he did not consider it essential to baptism. The form of his expression also suggests that it was a new and unusual custom. It does not seem at all likely that he had submitted to it in person in 1639. That conclusion is still more apparent from the statement found in the letter to Gov. Winthrop in 1649, since he there speaks of a "new baptism and the manner by dipping," and seems to represent that it was the practice in which Mr. John Clarke and the Providence men had concurred, but in which he in person had taken no part. All of these contemporary utterances are further supported by the circumstance that the religious affiliation of Mr. Williams prior to 1639 was with a people whose sympathy for immersion was notably defective, and who at the Westminster Assembly in August, 1644, did all that lay in their power to abolish the rite altogether. He had contentions with his brethren in Massachusetts on divers other points, but there is no account of his ever contending with their position on this point. And finally, the Anabaptists with whom he united his fortunes for a period of four months had not then adopted immersion in England, and there is no reason to suppose that Mr. Williams travelled in advance of them in this regard.

Over against all this has been set the testimony of William Coddington. A man of many changes, Mr. Coddington at last turned Quaker, and had become offended with Mr. Williams for his opposition to the advocates of that faith. In 1677, thirty-eight years after the event in question, he wrote a choleric epistle to George Fox in which he asserts that Williams was "one time for water baptism, men and women must be plunged into the water; and then throw it all down again." (Backus, vol. 1, p. 445.)

Coddington was not an eyewitness any more than were Winthrop and Peters. Newport is almost as far from Providence as Boston or Salem. The testimony of Coddington is not, properly speaking, contemporary testimony as was that of Winthrop and Peters. One's memory is capable of becoming confused in thirty-eight years, and Mr. Coddington's memory may have become confused. He may have supposed that the immersion of believers was practiced in Rhode Island in 1639, because it had been practiced since 1644; but that was a violent supposition. Robert Burns somewhere says that "six lines set down upon the spot are worth a cart load of reminiscences." The few lines set down upon the spot by Winthrop and Peters are worth a cartload of Coddington's confused reminiscences.

It is to be observed, moreover, that Coddington does not distinctly say that Williams was himself immersed, but that at one time he favored it. Nor does Cod-

dington say at what period of Williams' life he held to immersion. We have seen that in 1645 (Christenings make not Christians), which was after his return from England, he did have knowledge of immersion. In 1649 he was not satisfied about the "manner by dipping." Hence it can not be proven from Coddington's statement that the period referred to by him was 1639, which is the only date in Mr. Williams' life here under discussion.

The most reliable tradition on this subject has followed the lead of Winthrop and Peters, rather than that of Coddington. William Hubbard in his General History of New England from the Discovery to 1680, employs the word "rebaptized" and does not speak of immersion. (Backus, vol. 1, p. 106.) Cotton Mather in the Magnalia, 1702, mentions the "first baptism" and the "last baptism," but he knows nothing of dipping in either case (Magnalia, vol. 2, p. 432). Rev. John Callender in his Historical Discourse, Boston, 1739, could well afford to dodge the question, since at the time when his book was published he could not make up his mind whether Mr. Williams had ever been connected with the Baptists or not. Isaac Backus in his History of New England, etc., Boston, 1777, pp. 106–7, follows Winthrop, Peters and Hubbard, laying no emphasis upon immersion. The same position is held in his later and smaller work published in 1804. (Publication Society's ed., Phil., 1844, p. 50.)

Rev. John Stanford in the records of the First Baptist Church of Providence, which were prepared in 1775, does not mention immersion. At any rate, Benedict, who claims to have followed these records closely (History, New York, 1856, p. 457), employs the word baptize, and says nothing about immersion. (History, Boston, 1813, vol. 1, p. 475; cf. History, New York, 1856, p. 450.) Prof. J. D. Knowles (Memoir of Roger Williams, Boston, 1834, p. 165) follows the tradition in using the word baptize, but expressions found in other portions of his volume show that he understood the word to mean immerse. Rev. William Hague in his Historical Discourse, Boston, 1839, p. 30, occupies the position of the Providence Church Records, making no allusion to immersion, and the same is true of Rev. J. M. Cramp, Baptist History, Phil., 1868, p. 461. Rev. H. M. Dexter, As to Roger Williams, Boston, 1876, p. 107; Prof. H. C. Vedder, Short History of the Baptists, Phil., 1892, p. 154; Mr. Oscar S. Straus, Roger Williams, the Pioneer of Religious Liberty, New York, 1894, p. 107, and Rev. H. S. Burrage, History of the Baptists in New England, Phil., 1895, p. 23, are all in accord with this tradition, since each uses the word baptize, and avoids the words dip or immerse.

On the other hand Dr. Armitage, (History of the Baptists, New York, 1887, pp. 659–60, boldly argues for immersion, and Prof. A. H. Newman of

McMaster University (History, New York, 1894, p. 80, note) declares that "contemporary testimony is unanimos in favor of the view that immersion was practiced by Williams." The work of Dr. Newman is the most scientific and satisfactory that has yet been devoted to the history of American Baptists, but the language here cited is stronger than the facts of the case seem to justify. The only *really contemporary* testimony appears to favor the other side.

In the present state of information it would be unwise to pronounce with certainty any conclusion regarding this question. However, within the limits of the uncertainty which is freely acknowledged, the weight of evidence appears to incline very clearly towards the view that Roger Williams was sprinkled and not immersed at Providence in 1639.

DATE DUE

Hammond

MAR 2 4 1975

MAY 2 7 1980

FEB 2 6 1981

APR 3 1981

SEP 2 0 1982

OCT 3 1982

APR 0 8 1992

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

265.16
W623

Whitsitt, William Heth
AUTHOR

A question in Baptist history
TITLE

54096

265.16
W623 Whitsitt, William Heth
A question in Baptist history.
54096